

Horizon

A REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND ART

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by A. J. AYER

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by ALAN MOOREHEAD

THE POLITICAL CONDITION OF FRANCE

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COMMENT

THREE weeks spent recently in France were amongst the happiest in my life. My conscious and continuous joy in the perspectives of Paris, in the hot vermillion courtyards of Toulouse and in the intensely serious sun of Montpellier, was far from unique. Several other English visitors to France, when the Channel had ceased to be a barrier after five years, have recorded the same sense of release which may well be annoying to the English reader unprivileged to travel.

This happiness is, of course, largely a personal affair, but, in a sense, it needs justifying. It would be unfeeling for a visitor to Belsen or to Dachau to experience elation. And although France today is not a concentration camp, I noticed enough unhappy faces there (for instance, there were the thousands of repatriated prisoners) to make me feel that perhaps my happiness was not justified. It worried me to know that my pleasures were largely due to the efforts of many people to surround me with a hospitality which provided a kind of illusion. And I thought that the French writers invited to England could not possibly experience the joy I had known in France. If one likes Paris one tends to think that the Parisian will not like London.

However, Aragon, Paul Eluard and Pierre Emmanuel who have been recently to England, all assured me with great conviction, that, besides being overwhelmed with gratitude for the hospitality here, they had nothing but admiration for our virtues. The English, they said, behave well to each other, whereas in France everyone cheats, everyone distrusts everyone else. In Britain it is possible to get a decent meal for five shillings or under, whereas in France the economy of every family is made sordid by inevitable transactions with the Black Market. The English, they went on, have been able to bring their finest qualities of self-sacrifice and mutual co-operation steadily to bear against the pressure of the war. 'We, on the other hand, developed the worst as well as the best qualities. It became a virtue to cheat, be dishonest and extravagant under the Germans. Therefore, to us, your sane moderate way of life in a chaotic Europe seems a lesson of salvation.'

When T. S. Eliot's play *Murder in the Cathedral* was performed, Jean-Paul Sartre told me how excellent he found the scene in

which the Four Knights come to the front of the stage and give their reasons for killing the Archbishop, in which they appeal, he said, to a sense of 'civic consciousness.' Several times people in France deplored the French lack of civic sense.

It is therefore possible to understand the enthusiasm of the French visitor to England. Despite the shabbiness of dusty London, he sees the English as a people who have retained their sanity, a standard of living which is not on the edge of an abyss, decency, trust in each other, considerateness.

The English visitor has reasons which he can also put his finger on for rejoicing in the soul of France, particularly if he is an intellectual. The most important reason of all is that France is a country of creative activity, of free discussion, of revolutionary experience, of faith in the poetry of life, in which brilliant and energetic minds are seeking to relate the inner life of personality to the outer actions of society. This last sentence may sound vague, but there is a certain vagueness in the background of France today. There is a question attached to everything. What is France's potentiality in the struggle of power politics? How much money has your next door neighbour in the economy of a country where the Germans have forged the currency? What have been the spiritual lessons of the Resistance? And what the moral effect of the occupation?

France is a country taking her bearings and finding her way, whereas we have allotted shares, allotted burdens, allotted tasks and a set course. Moreover, the most dazzling minds of France are free to express themselves. The fact that the writers and intelligentsia have not been absorbed into the bureaucracy and the Services, means that thoughts are developed and expressed with far greater freedom than here. Discussion is wider, less on politically pre-determined lines; in longer terms, more human. Moreover a compensation of the disaster from which France has not recovered her social and political balance, is that many of the writers have political experiences integrated into their own personal experience, which are not just theoretical.

In a fluid political situation, some prominent writers have become political journalists. Mauriac, Jean-Paul Sartre, Camus, Aragon, Vercors, are all prominent journalists writing editorials on political subjects. These articles have a humanity and a wide morality which has become strange to journalism. Mauriac is

not ashamed to say in a leading article in *Figaro* that the supreme purpose of policy should be the fulfilment of the law of love, Vercors speculates on the future of Germany on the assumption that we must treat Germans as far as possible as human beings, Camus relates the moral actions of the French in Syria to the moral actions of Britain in her Empire.

Politically there may be dangers in all this, and yet intellectually France provides an atmosphere in which minds can be open. Amongst some of those who took part in the Resistance in the Provence, there are several 'Cercles de Connaissance', supported by Pierre Bertaux, now Commissaire of Toulouse in succession to Jean Cassou. Bertaux explained to me that when he had been in prison for two years during the Occupation he had learned the value of a certain rule of life. The Resistance Movement embodied for its members personal experiences which arose from the circumstances of Resistance itself and which had no direct connection with the political aims of the Resistance. A personal rule of life, a whole conception of humanity, and relationships of understanding and sympathy between individuals—all these within a framework of political aims—are the aims discussed by the 'Cercles de Connaissance', which are not a political movement. In Montpellier I was invited to a discussion with one of the Cercles, which consisted mostly of University Professors and professional men. Everyone agreed on the necessity of political action but at the same time that it was necessary constantly to discuss the relation of human personalities with political aims and to create international relations based on the understanding among individuals of each other's views. All over the world many individuals feel that the machinery of politics establishes aims which are not sufficiently related to the search of individuals for goodness as well as for economic security. 'Cercles de Connaissance' cannot be a vast movement because they are based on comprehension, not on power. They have obvious dangers: that they might provide the escape for some of the intellectuals of the Resistance from social problems into personal ones. If this danger is borne in mind, they might equally increase the awareness of social problems in the minds of people who find politics antipathetic.

The idea that political aims should enable human beings to be better men and women, better Frenchmen even, gives the

discussion of politics by French writers its force. Thus the communist or near-Communist group of poets, Seghers, Loys Masson and Frénaud (who is not a Communist but a sympathiser) have a surprising open-mindedness. Instead of believing that Communism must follow rigid dictatorial lines, they see it as a development which is different in every country and within every situation.

Masson explained to me that he had been convinced of the necessity of social revolution by seeing the treatment of the natives in Mauritius, by taking part in the Resistance in France and by seeing what had happened in France since the liberation. He believed that French Communism would be based on the French conception of the freedom of the individual. When I pointed out that nevertheless Communism was a disciplined movement in which action was determined by the will of the leaders, so that it was the qualities of the leaders which determined the nature of a Communist movement rather than the faith of individuals within the movement, he said this might be so but that nevertheless he thought that French Communism would make both a necessary and a benevolent change in France.

The relationship of poetry to politics is much discussed amongst the French writers. The poets of the Resistance are criticized for their lack of aesthetic 'purity' and, although they are vigorously defended by Aragon, in conversation they show a genuine humility. They admit that their work may have lost in purity and intensity through their divided attention. At the same time they believe in the possibility of a kind of poetry in which politics and a social ideal can be expressed because they have become fully integrated into the poet's own imaginative experience. Several writers pointed out to me how the conception of happiness—the happiness attainable in a socialist society—has been integrated into Eluard's poetry. They would also admit, however, that Eluard fails when he assumes into his recent poems political views and aspirations which he has not digested.

There is a fairly bitter conflict carried out in public around the Resistance writers whose halo of martyrdom invokes iconoclasts. At the same time the growth of social consciousness is general and the struggle is to relate it to literary performance. Francis Ponge, who writes prose poems like 'Still Lives' of extraordinary detachment and purity, discussed with me T. S. Eliot's views on

The Man of Letters and the Future of Europe (see HORIZON, Vol. X, No. 60). In this essay, it will be remembered that Eliot divides the Man of Letters into the writer whose duty is primarily towards language and who, secondly, being a cultural expert, has a duty to watch and criticise the tampering of political engineers with cultural traditions. Eliot developed these ideas in a lecture in Paris. Ponge found Eliot's preoccupation with problems of language beyond criticism, but he was disturbed by his tendency to regard language as a pure medium isolated in a writer's mind from his secondary existence as a citizen and as a politically conscious member of society. A poet such as Eluard, conscious of the political problems of our time and deeply experienced in the social conflict from the time of the Spanish Republic, through war and Occupation to the present day, is not a mind divided neatly into compartments of (a) literary artist, (b) political thinker and partisan. A revolution has taken place in his whole consciousness. All his mental activities take place in words and his problem may well be to set aside the existing cultural tradition and express some entirely new idea such as his vision of happiness in a new society.

France is in an extremely fluid situation today and intellectual life is also fluid, tending to pour over everything. What brings the French writers together is a strong urge to reach towards a core of actuality. The visionary poetry of Eluard has a hard core of solid experience and even of a political programme. Camus's extraordinary novel *L'Etranger* is disturbing because it makes us conscious of a modern type of hero, the man who is truthful and detached through a despair which releases him of obligations to others and to himself—to everything in fact except the truth that life is essentially absurd. The 'human situation' within chaotic conditions of Emmanuel's poetry is another real experience of many people taken straight from life today. Except with the Communists, there is no set line towards this reality. The point is to realize it in words, and in this, as Ponge said to me: 'The poet is like a painter who stands with brush in hand beside three huge pots of paint containing the primary colours, which are words. The whole of the rest of the world passes by and dips into the pots to depict what the newspapers, the politicians, the journalists, the advertisers, say. But he has to use these colours in order to say what he means in a fresh, vivid, inescapable way, so that the

passers-by see in his pictures the presentation of a true experience created in the colours which they themselves are constantly wasting and abusing.'

It is impossible not to find this intense mental activity in France stimulating. Yet at the same time it is rootless and feverish, poets clutching at straws of truth in the rising flood of the distressed masses of the repatriated forlorn millions of prisoners, who pour in from a Europe which is a vast watershed of hopeless and impoverished masses. In this situation, we who write in English do not help the French by despising our own achievements, which often have the solidity which is as much a need to them as their freedom is light and sweetness to us. The renewal of contact between French and English intellectual life is of enormous importance and if it can be maintained it will contribute to the construction of a picture of human values against which to measure the politics of our distracted age.

STEPHEN SPENDER

J. BETJEMAN

MAY DAY SONG FOR NORTH
OXFORD

(*Annie Laurie* tune)

Belbroughton Road is bonny, and pinkly bursts the spray
Of prunus and forsythia across the public way,
For a full spring-tide of blossom seethed and departed hence,
Leaving land-locked pools of jonquils by sunny garden fence.

And a constant sound of flushing runneth from windows where
The toothbrush too is airing in this new North Oxford air.
From Summerfields to Lynam's, the thirsty tarmac dries,
And a Cherwell mist dissolveth on elm-discovering skies.

Oh! well-bound Wells and Bridges! Oh! earnest ethical search
For the wide high-table λογος of St. C.S. Lewis's Church.
This diamond-eyed Spring morning my soul soars up the slope
Of a right good rough-cast buttress on the housewall of my hope.

MAY DAY SONG FOR NORTH OXFORD 11

And open-necked and freckled, where once there grazed the cows,
Emancipated children swing on old apple boughs,
And pastel-shaded book rooms bring New Ideas to birth
And the whitening hawthorn only hears the heart beat of the earth.

MCMXLV

STEPHEN SPENDER

SUMMER

The midsummer glow
Shines transparent in her eyes,
Colour of clover
On grass and flesh where she lies.
Bird-shadow cloud-shadow
Draw a net of sighs
Over her from the sun her lover.

Through the August days
She drinks his acres of light
Which, quivering through dreams
Beyond mind-sight and eye-sight,
Reach a womb where his rays
Flow into her night,
Their light and dark commingling streams.

What pallor ah what dearth
When August's flesh,
Kaleidoscope of flowers
And September's harsh scorched fetish,
Are lidded under earth
With eyes which enmesh
Fair forgotten withered harvest hours.

A. J. AYER

NOVELIST-PHILOSOPHERS

V—JEAN-PAUL SARTRE

JEAN-PAUL SARTRE is a philosopher who has not by any means confined himself to writing philosophy, but it is arguable that his plays and his novels, however interesting and impressive in themselves, cannot be fully understood except in the light of his philosophical views. Philosophically, he is usually described as an Existentialist. The use of this label is justified in so far as he clearly owes much to Husserl, from whom the group of contemporary German philosophers who are commonly known as Existentialists has chiefly drawn its inspiration; and much of his jargon and a number of his views reveal the not altogether happy influence of Heidegger and Jaspers. Nevertheless he is a sufficiently independent thinker to make it profitable to deal directly with his own exposition of his philosophy, without entering into the question of its historical affinities. Its latest and most complete expression is to be found in his book *L'Être et le Néant*, which was published in France in 1943. This book is exceedingly long, over 700 large and closely printed pages, always difficult and often obscure. This has not prevented it from arousing considerable enthusiasm, even outside the circle of professional philosophers; but I suspect that it is one of those works, not uncommon in the history of philosophy, that are more readily admired than understood. Without being confident that my own understanding of it is correct, I shall, however, try to give a relatively brief critical analysis of it. This analysis will be divided into three separate parts. The first will deal with the distinction which Sartre draws between what he calls *l'en-soi* and what he calls *le pour-soi*; the second with his conception of time, and the third with his treatment of the philosophical problem of the existence of other human beings besides oneself.

I. L'EN-SOI AND LE POUR-SOI

(a) *The Principle of Identity*

'Everything is what it is,' said Bishop Butler, 'and not another thing'. If this be interpreted as an enunciation of the principle of

identity, then most logicians would regard it as a tautology. And since they now, with good reason, prefer to talk in terms of propositions rather than things, they would express it symbolically in the form 'p implies p' rather than 'A is A', or, in other words, by saying, not that everything is what it is, but that every proposition implies itself. The originality of Sartre is not simply that he reverts to the older form of expression but that he does not regard the principle as a tautology. He accepts it as valid for one type of being, namely the object-in-itself, *l'en soi*, of which, in his view, the defining characteristic is precisely that it is what it is. But he thinks that there is also another type of being, called by him *le pour-soi*, the object-for-itself, which is characterized by the fact that it is what it is not and is not what it is. And, as we shall see, this second type of being, the type of *le pour-soi*, is exemplified, in his opinion, by human consciousness, and specifically by any conscious state.

I have chosen to translate '*l'en-soi*', not indeed very felicitously, by 'object-in-itself' rather than 'thing-in-itself' because the term 'thing-in-itself' is associated with Kant, and Sartre does not share the Kantian conception of a thing-in-itself standing mysteriously behind the appearances. On the contrary, he seems to acquiesce in the phenomenalists' identification of a physical object with the infinite series of its appearances. He differs, however, from the phenomenalists in that he refuses to allow that the being of a phenomenon can consist merely in its appearing; and, *a fortiori*, he rejects the more general principle that to be is to be perceived. For, in the first place, he holds that a state of perception, or indeed any cognitive situation, is to be considered as a relation between a subject and an object, with the consequence that even if the being of the object consisted merely of its being perceived by that subject, or to speak more accurately, in its being the objective factor in that perception, the being of the subject could not consist merely in its being the objective factor in some other perception, on pain of a vicious infinite regress; and secondly, he accepts Husserl's view that all consciousness is intentional, in the sense of being directed upon an object which is other than itself, and thereby arrives at the conclusion that an object must *already* be in order to be perceived. This view that all consciousness is intentional, which I believe to be false, is indeed vital to the whole of Sartre's argument, and will be discovered to be at the root of

many of the paradoxical statements that he finds occasion to make about *le pour-soi*.

Departing thus from phenomenism, Sartre appears to reach a position analogous to that once held by Bertrand Russell, according to which familiar physical objects are reduced to groups of '*sensibilia*' but the '*sensibilia*' themselves are conceived realistically as existing independently of any actual, or even possible, sensation; and, if this is so, it is presumably the individual *sensible* that that exemplifies for Sartre *l'être-en-soi*. In any case, whatever may be his conception of the constituents of the physical world, I think it is fairly clear that it is this type of being that he supposes them to possess. Concerning *l'être-en-soi* he then goes on to say that 'it is isolated in its being' and that 'it harbours no relation with that which is not itself', or even indeed with itself, in so far as that would imply a breach in its perfect self-identity. Its isolation is such as to exclude all becoming or passing away, and all negation. Accordingly, it is not, in Sartre's opinion, permissible to say of it even that it is not what it is not, or that it is not yet what it will be, or that it is other than something else. Or rather, such things can be said, but only with reference to an external consciousness which is required to give them significance. In itself, *l'être-en-soi* just is, and that is all there is to it.

I find these last remarks gratuitously paradoxical. It is perfectly true that a particular existent, considered in itself, does not intrinsically point to anything other than itself. But it does not in the least follow that it may not in fact be related to other objects, even though the fact that it is so related is not formally deducible from its intrinsic description. Similarly, in the case of a continuant, it is true that the character, and indeed the existence, of earlier and later phases cannot be formally deduced from the character of any given phase; but here again, it does not follow that the various phases may not in fact be inter-related, both temporarily and in other ways. To object, as Sartre probably would, that the possession of such external relations is incompatible with the object's self-identity is to assume that everything that can truly be said about an object is necessarily included in its definition; and I think that this can easily be seen to be a mistake. Furthermore, the fact that the presence of a conscious observer is essential for the *discovery* of these relationships does not entitle us to conclude that it is also necessary for their *existence*. The conscious

observer is indeed required for the formulation of a proposition which states that two objects are related, but the truth of the proposition may still be logically independent of anybody's apprehending it.

(b) *The Problem of Negation*

As we have seen, Sartre holds that *l'être-en-soi* is entirely positive. In his own words, '*il n'enveloppe aucune négation*' and '*il ne connaît donc pas l'altérité*'. But how then, he asks, does it happen that when one interrogates nature it is always possible to receive a negative, and not only a positive, answer? Is negation merely 'a quality of judgements', or is the negative element, '*le néant*', part of 'the structure of the real'? Suppose, for example, that I go to look for my friend Pierre in a *café* and fail to find him there. In that case, the *café* becomes a background for the appearance of him whom I expect to see there; the appearances of the persons who actually are there fail to hold my attention; what I am aware of is the absence of Pierre. Sartre sums this up in his peculiar way by saying: '*C'est Pierre s'enlevant comme néant sur le fond de néantisation du café*'. And for this and other similar reasons he concludes that *le néant* is the origin of negation, and not the other way round. But where then, he asks, does *le néant* come from? It must be produced by something, he thinks, since, being a Nothing, it itself has no being but 'is been'. '*Le Néant n'est pas, le Néant "est été"*'. Its property is 'to make nothing of', but since it is not, it cannot do that even to itself, but has somehow to suffer it. '*Le Néant ne se néantise pas, le Néant "est néantisé"*'. Pursuing this preposterous course of reasoning, Sartre then declares that it is beyond the power of any wholly positive being to produce the *Néant*. What is required is a being which 'makes nothing of the Nothing in its being', which is, in fact, its own *néant*; and this he finds in the person of man.

What is, I think, valid in this argument is that there is no way of reducing negative to positive propositions. To maintain, for example, that saying that Pierre is not in the *café* is equivalent to saying that he is somewhere else would not, even if it were correct, dispose of the negative element, since it is still concealed in the expression 'somewhere else'. It is indeed possible to conceive of a logical language in which the expression 'somewhere else' would be replaced by a disjunction of place-names, in such

a way that the possibility of any two names standing for the same place was logically excluded; but the trouble is that the disjunction would have to be infinite, so that the original negative proposition could never actually be translated. But even if it be granted that negative propositions are, in this sense, irreducible, it does not follow that there are negative facts, unless this is taken to mean merely that some negative propositions are true. The facts are always positive, inasmuch as what verifies a negative proposition is always an experience which has a positive content. Psychologically, it may very well be the case that what strikes me when I go into the café is primarily the absence of Pierre. There are what may be described as primitive sensations, the character of which merits analysis. But I do not think that anything in this analysis will be found to justify the institution of a search into the ontology of not-being.

(c) *The Structure of Consciousness*

It is characteristic of men that they are conscious of thinking. Moreover, according to Sartre, every conscious state is necessarily a self-conscious state. Believing is being conscious of believing, being sad is being conscious of being sad, perceiving a table is being conscious of perceiving a table. In Sartre's words, '*toute conscience positionnelle d'objet est en même temps conscience non-positionnelle d'elle-même*'; and the same holds good, in his view, for all the other modes of *conscience*. His way of describing this is to say that every conscious state, and consequently man as a conscious being, exists in the mode of the object-for-itself, *le pour-soi*. And since he assumes that all consciousness is intentional, and therefore in some manner distinct from its object, he is led to depict *le pour-soi* as being, from one point of view, divided in itself. Thus he argues that to be present to oneself implies being, in a certain sense, absent from oneself. One remains oneself, but in so far as self-consciousness involves division, the presence of self to self, one is not entirely oneself. Similarly, while, in the case of a state of belief, the belief cannot occur without the consciousness of believing, nor that consciousness without the belief, the two are neither completely distinct nor completely fused. As Sartre puts it, he finds that they play a perpetual mirror game with one another. But what is it that separates the two terms in all these self-conscious relationships? What is it that divides me from myself, my belief

from my consciousness of my belief, my sadness from my consciousness of my sadness? Sartre answers that it is Nothing, the Void, *le Néant*. It is here indeed that he discovers the pure negative element for which he has been searching. And accordingly he concludes that *le pour-soi* is the being which is '*son propre néant*'.

The way in which *le pour-soi* is what it is not, and is not what it is, is illustrated by Sartre in an analysis of the phenomena of sincerity and self-deception ('*mauvaise-foi*'). The object of sincerity is to recognize what one is and so to be what one is; the object of *mauvaise-foi* is to conceal what one is and be what one is not. But, argues Sartre, the mere fact that sincerity, the being what one is, is posited as an *ideal* proves that one is not what one is; for an ideal is essentially something that has to be attained and consequently is not already realized. Again, the man who is *de mauvaise-foi* must somehow be aware of himself as being so, since every conscious state is self-conscious. But how then can he really be so? How, for example, being cowardly, and being conscious of being cowardly, can he pretend to himself that he is brave, and, being aware that he is pretending, yet deceive himself? Sartre's answer is that if he were a coward 'in the way in which this ink-pot is an ink-pot' the possibility of *mauvaise-foi* could not even be conceived. But the facts as he sees them are more complicated. The man who feels afraid is conscious that he feels afraid, but this means for Sartre that the feeling of fear is put in question, because of the Void that subsists between it and the consciousness, which necessarily accompanies it. The man believes that he is a coward, but since 'to believe is to know that one believes and to know that one believes is no longer to believe', the fact that he believes it is supposed by Sartre also to entail that he does not. If one could be what one is, in the way that a physical object is what it is, *la mauvaise-foi* would not be possible, but the divided nature of consciousness, the intrusion of the *néant* into every conscious state, prevents this, in Sartre's opinion, from ever being the case. All that one can do, according to him, is to *play* at being what one is. The waiter, for example, is a waiter, in the sense that he performs the office of a waiter rather than that, say, of a journalist. But inasmuch as he is conscious of himself as being a waiter, he thinks of it as something that he has to make himself be, as a part that he has to act, and therefore, according to this argument, it becomes something that he actually *is not*. For if he *were* it, there

could be no question of his *having to be* it, in this sense. Accordingly the waiter, like everybody else, is what he is not and is not what he is. It follows that the aim of sincerity, wholly to be what one is, is logically unattainable. And since '*la sincérité est consciente de manquer son but par nature*', it is itself *de mauvaise foi*.

Generalizing these conclusions, Sartre finds that an essential characteristic of 'human reality' is '*le manque*', an incompleteness which by being conscious becomes frustration. *Le pour-soi* strives incessantly to be wholly and self-identically *en-soi* in the manner of a physical object, but without sacrificing the self-consciousness which distinguishes it from *l'en-soi*, and the achievement of this, according to Sartre, is a logical impossibility. Thus, '*la réalité humaine est un dépassement perpétuel vers un coïncidence avec soi qui n'est jamais donné*'. The being of *le pour-soi* is never 'given' but always 'put in question'. It is always separated from itself by '*le néant de l'altérité*'. And while it is because he exists *pour-soi*, and not *en-soi*, that a man is, on this theory, able to be free, his freedom itself is a function of *le néant*. For it is in '*l'angoisse*' that, according to Sartre, a man becomes conscious of his freedom; and it is the fact that whatever motives may influence him, *nothing* absolutely determines him to follow one course rather than another that is responsible both for his anguish and for the freedom it exemplifies.

(d) Looking-glass Logic

This metaphysical pessimism, which is well in the existentialist tradition, is no doubt appropriate to our times, but I do not think that it is logically well founded. In particular, Sartre's reasoning on the subject of *le néant* seems to me exactly on a par with that of the King in 'Alice through the Looking-glass'. 'I see nobody on the road,' said Alice. 'I only wish I had such eyes,' remarked the King. 'To be able to see Nobody! And at that distance too!' And again, if I remember rightly: 'Nobody passed me on the road'. 'He cannot have done that, or he would have been here first.' In these cases the fallacy is easy enough to detect, but although Sartre's reasoning is less engagingly naïve, I do not think that it is any better. The point is that words like 'nothing' and 'nobody' are not used as the names of something insubstantial and mysterious; they are not used to *name* anything at all. To say that two objects are separated by nothing is to say that they are *not*

separated; and that is all that it amounts to. What Sartre does, however, is to say that, being separated by Nothing, the objects are both united and divided. There is a thread between them; only, it is a very peculiar thread, both invisible and intangible. But this is a trick that should not deceive anyone. The confusion is then still further increased by the attempt to endow Nothing with an activity, the fruit of which is found in such statements as Heidegger's '*das Nichts nichtet*' or Sartre's '*le Néant est néantisé*'. For whatever may be the affective value of these statements, I cannot but think that they are literally nonsensical.

In Sartre's case, the root of the trouble, in my opinion, lies in his analysis of consciousness. Against him, I should argue that to say that a feeling is conscious may be pleonastic; it does not necessarily add anything to the statement that it is a feeling. If the feeling is mine, it forms part of my 'conscious history'; but it enters into this history as a *constituent* and not necessarily as an *object* of consciousness. It may indeed become an object, in the sense that I may analyse it and reflect upon it, and the effect of this may be in certain cases that the original feeling is modified or transformed. But this analysis or reflection is a different conscious process, and need not itself be reflected on in its turn. I agree that people *may* 'play at being what they are', but I cannot see that Sartre has given us any good reason for supposing that they *must*. Moreover, even in the case of a person who does 'play at being what he is' I think that Sartre's way of describing his condition is unnecessarily mystifying. For the ground for saying that 'he *is* what he *is not*' is just that he performs the actions which are commonly regarded as definitive of the type of person in question; and the ground for saying that 'he *is not* what he *is*' is just that his manner of performing these actions is conditioned by his idea of the way in which they ought to be performed, with the result that he is unable to perform them naturally; and these two propositions are not mutually contradictory. Neither is the possibility of the person's acting naturally ever logically excluded. If he is unable to do so it is because of a psychological complication, which does not necessarily apply to others, or to himself on all occasions. Psychologically, indeed, I think that Sartre's analyses are often very penetrating. But the logical and metaphysical structure in which he has enveloped them in this part of his work, does not seem to me sound.

2. SARTRE'S CONCEPTION OF TIME

(a) *Le Pour-soi as the source of Time*

We have seen that for Sartre *le pour-soi* is essentially a being 'qui se néantise', and this fact suffices, according to him, to make it temporal. Moreover, he holds that it is uniquely through *le pour-soi* that 'temporality comes into the world'. For, in his view, objects which exist *en-soi* cannot in themselves possess temporal properties. If they are nevertheless capable of being situated in time, it is only with reference to a *pour-soi*, with the states of which they are severally contemporaneous. They are indeed required by the *pour-soi* for the determination of its temporal history, but they cannot, other than derivatively, have any temporal history of their own.

The reason why Sartre denies to objects which exist *en-soi* the power of being temporally related is once again his refusal to admit that relations can, in the normal fashion, be external to their terms. Thus he argues that 'whether A be an instant or an event, A's temporal priority to B presupposes the existence in A's very nature of an incompleteness which points to B'. 'If A is prior to B,' he continues, 'it is *in* B that A is so determined. Otherwise, if A and B are isolated in their separate instants, neither the coming into being nor the passing away of B can bestow the smallest particular quality on A. In short, if A is to be prior to B, it must in its very being be *in* B as its own future. And conversely, if B is to be posterior to A, it must lag behind itself in A, which will confer this succession on it. Accordingly, if we assume *a priori* that A and B are objects-in-themselves, it is impossible to establish any liaison of succession between them. This liaison will in fact be a purely external relation, and as such, it must be admitted, it rests in the air, deprived of any substratum, unable to bite into either A or B, in a sort of intemporal void.' But why, we must ask, should it be supposed necessary for a relation of temporal succession to 'bite' into its terms? Why should a substratum, or any other metaphysical prop, be required to make it possible for one event simply to succeed another? To argue, as Sartre does, that if A precedes B it must somehow be *in* B, and that if B succeeds A it must somehow be *in* A, is to argue that if A precedes B it really does not, and that if B succeeds A it really does not either; and this seems to me a

remarkably poor argument. Admittedly, a relation of temporal succession may be internal, in the sense that it may be made part of the definition of an A that it should be succeeded by a B, or part of the definition of a B that it should be preceded by an A; and if one wishes to use picturesque language, one may then say that it is in the very nature of A to point forward to B, or that it is in the very nature of B to point back to A. But all that this means is that one has decided not to use the *words* 'A' and 'B' except in cases where this relation of succession obtains, or rather that one has decided so to use these words that to say that A is not succeeded by B, or that B is not preceded by A, becomes *self-contradictory*. It will, however, always remain possible to describe exactly the same empirical fact by using other words 'C' and 'D' in the place of 'A' and 'B', in such a way that, while it may be true to say that C and D stand to one another in the relation of temporal precedence and succession, it is not self-contradictory to say that they do not. The point is that while you may so juggle with your words as to transform external into internal relations, which means, in fact, that you are transforming empirical propositions into tautologies, you do not thereby dispose of the empirical facts which your original propositions served to describe. Now the empirical fact is that objects which, in Sartre's terminology, would be said to exist *en-soi* do have temporal relations to one another, which are logically independent of any temporal relations they may have to objects which would be said to exist *pour-soi*; and I cannot see that Sartre has given us any valid reason for supposing that they do not.

But not only has Sartre failed to prove that the *pour-soi* is required for the *en-soi* to be temporal; but he does not, in my opinion, succeed even in showing that it is necessary, on his premises, for the *pour-soi* to be temporal itself. His contention is, as we have seen, that the *pour-soi* must be temporal because it is a being which 'makes nothing of' itself; and his reason for supposing that the *pour-soi* is a being which makes nothing of itself seems to lie in his belief, which we have already examined, that every state of consciousness is necessarily separated from itself, albeit by nothing. But even if this analysis of consciousness were correct, the conclusion which Sartre draws would not follow from it. For what he apparently wishes to maintain is that human beings, inasmuch as they exist *pour-soi*, are obliged to

engage in a vain pursuit of themselves, which carries them along in time through a series of states of consciousness; and this is not by any means entailed by the proposition that every state of consciousness vainly strives to be at one with itself. On the contrary, this view that every state of consciousness is engaged in a narcissistic game of battledore and shuttlecock with itself would seem to imply that it must be either eternal or timeless: it certainly does not explain why one state of consciousness should ever be replaced by another. Of course, I do not myself wish to deny that states of consciousness do have finite durations or that they do in fact succeed one another. All that I am claiming is that there is nothing in Sartre's analysis of consciousness to account for the existence of this temporal process; and it is from his analysis of consciousness that he seems to derive his conclusions concerning the structure of *le pour-soi*. There are, however, traces in his work of what appears to be the entirely different theory that human beings 'bring time into the world' because they are appetitive, in the sense that they entertain desires and make choices which arise out of the past, without however being determined by it, and require the future for a realization, which it seems that they can never in fact obtain. According to this theory, all choices are free, but one's life at any given moment is governed by a basic choice, which gives its meaning to the past, as well as to one's environment, and drives one on towards the future. '*Nous choisir!*' Sartre explains, '*c'est nous néantiser, c'est-à-dire faire qu'un futur vienne nous annoncer ce que nous sommes en conférant un sens à notre passé.*' And so, he somewhat surprisingly concludes, '*liberté, choix, néantisation, temporalisation ne font qu'une seule et même chose*'.

(b) *The Dimensions of Time*

Whatever one may think of these extraordinary pronouncements, they convince Sartre that, for one reason or another, '*le pour-soi se temporalise*'; and this it achieves in the three 'dimensions' of past, present and future. What is remarkable about it, however, is that it contrives both to be and not to be all these three at once. Thus, at any given moment, according to Sartre, I am my own past because the past is all that I ever can be *en-soi*. In the present, as we have seen, I am what I am not and I am not what I am; the possibility of my being anything *en-soi* is ruled out by

the structure of my state of consciousness as an object *pour-soi*. But when this state of consciousness moves into the past, the *pour-soi* that it becomes *en-soi*, not indeed in the sense that it changes its internal constitution, but in the sense that the process which makes it *pour-soi* cannot any longer continue. I am my past because there is no going back on it. It is the past of this present, but equally this present is the present of precisely that past. At the same time, if only because the past has become *en-soi*, I am not my past. 'Si je ne puis rentrer dans le passé, ce n'est pas par quelque vertu magique qui le mettrait hors d'atteinte, mais simplement parce qu'il est *en-soi* et que je suis *pour-moi*; le passé est ce que je suis sans pouvoir le vivre.' Thus, what a *pour-soi* is lies behind it, 'comme le perpetuel *dépassé*'. Furthermore, Sartre affirms that *le pour-soi* can exist only as '*un dépassement néantisant*', which implies '*un dépassé*', and so draws the conclusion that there can be no consciousness without a past. As a conscious being, therefore, I mysteriously come into the world with a past: for birth, believe it or not, is '*le surgissement du rapport absolu de Passéité comme être ekstatische du Pour-soi dans l'En-soi*'.

As for my future, I am that too, but in a rather different fashion. It appears that I am my future in that I apprehend myself as incomplete, and my future is what is required to complete me. That is to say, the future is '*le manquant*', and as such, according to Sartre, it must be given '*dans l'unité d'un seul surgissement avec le pour-soi qui manque*'; for otherwise 'there would be nothing by reference to which *le Pour-soi* could apprehend itself as not-yet.' Moreover, in so far as I behave teleologically, and Sartre sometimes appears to suggest that I never do anything else, it is, in his opinion, the future that makes me not merely what I am, but even what I was, in the sense that it is only in the light of the future that I can properly interpret my past. But while the future is '*myself waiting for myself*', it is also the case that I am always free not to be it. '*Je suis mon futur dans la perspective constante de la possibilité de ne l'être pas.*' Thus the *pour-soi* tries its hardest to be the future that it 'has to be', but the price it pays for its freedom is that it must always try in vain. And the conclusion which Sartre characteristically draws is that the future itself has no being *qua* future. '*Le futur n'est pas*', he says, '*il se possibilise*'.

So far we have dealt only with the past, present and future of *le pour-soi*. But in addition to the temporality of *le pour-soi* there

appear also in Sartre's system 'le temporalité psychique' and the derivative temporality of the objects which exist *en-soi*. Concerning the temporality of the objects which exist *en-soi* there is not indeed a great deal to be said. They are supposed to emerge as objects for *le pour-soi* through 'an original negation' by which the *pour-soi* constitutes itself as *not being* the thing of which it is conscious, '*Le pour-soi est un être pour qui son être est en question dans son être en tant que cet être est essentiellement une certaine manière de ne pas être un être qu'il pose du même coup comme autre que lui*'. And since the *pour-soi* pursues itself through time, the objects which it posits as *not being* itself acquire their temporal position as past, present or future through their contemporaneity with past, present or future states of the *pour-soi*. But this power of being contemporaneous either with *le pour-soi*, or derivatively with one another, comes to them, as we have seen, only through the action of *le pour-soi*. Similarly, it is only in virtue of *le pour-soi* that objects manage, according to this theory, to acquire spatial relations to one another. For space is declared by Sartre to be, of all things, '*l'instabilité du monde saisi comme totalité en tant qu'il peut toujours se désagréger en multiplicité externe*'; and it is only by a *pour-soi* that this breaking-up of a totality can be achieved, since objects which exist *en-soi* are quite incompetent to establish 'relations of exteriority' among themselves. Furthermore it is maintained that space can come into the world only through a being 'whose mode of being is temporalization', on the somewhat obscure ground that 'it is the fashion in which this being loses itself ec-statically in order to realize Being'.

The case of *la temporalité psychique* is even more complicated, inasmuch as 'the psychical objects', which form the subject-matter of the science of psychology, as it is ordinarily conceived, are supposed by Sartre to be the product of an 'impure self-consciousness', which marks 'an abortive effort of *le pour-soi*' to be someone else while remaining itself. For whereas in the case of pure self-consciousness, the subject is the object, while remaining separated from it by a *néant*, in the case of impure self-consciousness, the object is treated by the subject as if it were not the *pour-soi* that it is but an *en-soi*. The result, according to Sartre, is the creation of a shadowy being which appears, I am sorry to say, '*comme une totalité achevée et probable la où le Pour-soi se fait exister dans l'unité diasporique d'une totalité detotalisée*'. These

beings appear temporal, but their temporality is only a 'virtual entity', which is, as it were, the 'projection of the original temporality into the *en-soi*'. In short, '*le temps psychique n'est que la collection liée des objets temporels. Mais sa différence essentielle avec la temporalité originelle: c'est qu'il est au lieu que celle-ci se temporalise.*'

(c) *Return to Common Sense*

I have dwelt at some length upon Sartre's conception of time, because it is evidently of cardinal importance to his system, but in spite of my extensive use of quotations I am not sure that I have summarized it correctly, and I certainly do not flatter myself that I have made it intelligible. To the extent, however, to which I think that I have understood it, its effect upon me at any rate has been to increase my suspicion that what is called existentialist philosophy has become very largely an exercise in the art of misusing the verb 'to be'. For, after all, it is a fact that in the French, as in the English language, verbs have tenses, and this applies to the verb 'to be' no less than to the others. Consequently, if one is going to talk about being one's past or one's future, or about the past and future themselves being or not being, the first question that arises is whether the verb 'to be' is here being given a temporal signification. If it is, then to say that one is one's past or one's future is simply self-contradictory; one is what one is, one was what one was, and one will be what one will be; and any attempt to throw the past into the future, or the present into the past, or to jumble them all up together, will be found to result in nothing but hopeless logical confusion. If, on the other hand, the verb 'to be' is being used in some non-temporal sense, then all this talk about being and not being must be in some degree metaphorical, if it is significant at all, so that what is required is to discover exactly what is being stated, and this is usually no easy matter. In Sartre's case, pretty well the only general truths that seem to emerge from a mass of often very subtle, but desperately wrongheaded, ratiocination are that the significance of events is not always apparent at the time of their occurrence, and that a person's behaviour at any given moment tends to be causally conditioned both by his memory of what has happened to him in the past and by his expectations of what will happen to him in the future. But neither these rather trivial propositions, nor any

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others that I am able to extract from Sartre's work, can be regarded as contributing much towards the solution of any of the philosophical problems that are ordinarily associated with the analysis of time.

[TO BE CONCLUDED]

ALAN MOOREHEAD

GLIMPSES OF GERMANY¹

II—BELSEN

JUST before you get to the main entrance of Belsen concentration camp—or rather the place where the camp used to be before the British burned it down—you come on a farmhouse. I suggested to the others in my party that we should turn in there and eat lunch before—rather than after—we visited the camp.

While the table was being set for us in the dining room we were interested to know from the farmer what he thought of Belsen. 'I don't know very much about it,' he said. 'Each morning I had to drive up there with a cart full of vegetables—swedes and turnips mostly—and one of the S.S. guards took the horse and cart from me at the gate. After a bit the cart and horse were returned to me and I drove away. I was never allowed inside, and I didn't want to go in anyway. I knew something horrible was going on but I didn't ask about it lest I should find myself inside.'

We finished the meal and drove up to the gate with a special pass which General Dempsey had given the correspondents: from the first Dempsey was very keen that we should see Belsen and write about it. Although the British had only captured the place from the Germans a few days before they seemed to have things well organized. Hungarian guards were still spaced along the barbed wire fence, good-looking men who jumped eagerly to attention when an army vehicle came by. At the gate British soldiers were on guard. There were notices in English: 'Danger Typhus', 'Car Park', 'Powder Room', 'Inquiries' and so on.

A young army doctor and a captain from the Pioneers were in charge. The Captain's job was supervising the counting and

¹From *Eclipse*, to be published in the autumn by Hamish Hamilton.

burial of bodies. Possibly as a form of immunization from the grisly work he appeared to be in particularly jovial spirits.

'I love doing this,' he said, picking up the metal syringe filled with anti-louse powder. 'Come on.'

A squirt up each sleeve. One down the trousers. Two more squirts down the back and front of the shirt and a final shot on the hair. It was rather pleasant.

'We collected the local burgomeisters from the surrounding villages this morning and took them round the camp,' the doctor said.

'How did they take it?'

'One of them was sick and another one wouldn't look. They all said they had never dreamed that this was going on.'

We were now walking down the main driveway towards the first of the huts and administrative buildings. There were large crowds of civilian prisoners about, both those who strolled about in groups talking many different languages and those who sat silent on the ground. In addition there were many forms lying on the earth partly covered in rags, but it was not possible to say whether they were alive or dead or simply in the process of dying. It would be a day or two before the doctors got around to them for a diagnosis.

'There's quite a different air about the place in the last two days,' the doctor said. 'They seem much more cheerful now.'

'And the burial rate has gone down considerably,' the captain added. 'I'm handling just under three hundred a day now. It was five hundred to start with. And we are evacuating five hundred every day to the Panzer training school. It has been made into a hospital. Would you like to see the S.S. boys?'

We saw the women guards first. A British sergeant threw open the cell door and some twenty women wearing dirty grey skirts and tunics were sitting and lying on the floor.

'Get up,' the sergeant roared in English.

They got up and stood to attention in a semi-circle round the room, and we looked at them. Thin ones, fat ones, scraggy ones and muscular ones; all of them ugly, and one or two of them distinctly cretinous. I pointed out one, a big woman with bright golden hair and a bright pink complexion.

'She was Kramer's girl friend,' the sergeant growled. 'Nice lot, aren't they?'

There was another woman in a second room with almost delicate features, but she had the same set staring look in her eyes.

The atmosphere of the reformatory school and the prison was inescapable.

Outside in the passageway there was a large blackboard ruled off in squares with white lines. Down the left-hand side of the board was a list of nationalities—'Poles, Dutch, Russians' and so on. Spaced along the top of the board was a list of religions and political faiths—'Communist, Jew, Atheist'. From the board one might have seen at a glance just how many prisoners were in the camp from each nation, and how they were subdivided politically and religiously. However, most of the numbers appeared to have been rubbed off, and it was difficult to make out the totals exactly. Germans seemed to make up the majority of the prisoners. After them Russians and Poles. A great many were Jews. As far as one could decipher there had been half a dozen British here, one or two Americans. There had been something like fifty thousand prisoners altogether.

As we approached the cells of the S.S. guards the sergeant's language became ferocious.

'We have had an interrogation this morning,' the captain said. 'I'm afraid they are not a pretty sight.'

'Who does the interrogation?'

'A Frenchman. I believe he was sent up here specially from the French underground to do the job.'

The sergeant unbolted the first door and flung it back with a crack like thunder. He strode into the cell, jabbing a metal spike in front of him.

'Get up,' he shouted. 'Get up. Get up, you dirty bastards.' There were half a dozen men lying or half lying on the floor. One or two were able to pull themselves erect at once. The man nearest me, his shirt and face spattered with blood, made two attempts before he got on to his knees and then gradually on to his feet. He stood with his arms half stretched out in front of him, trembling violently.

'Get up,' shouted the sergeant. They were all on their feet now, but supporting themselves against the wall.

'Get away from that wall.'

They pushed themselves out into space and stood there swaying. Unlike the women they looked not at us, but vacantly in front, staring at nothing.

Same thing in the next cell and the next where the men who

were bleeding and were dirty were moaning something in German.

'You had better see the doctor,' the Captain said. 'He's a nice specimen. He invented some of the tortures here. He had one trick of injecting creosote and petrol into the prisoner's veins. He used to go around the huts and say "Too many people in here. Far too many." Then he used to loose off the barrel of his revolver round the hut. The doctor has just finished his interrogation.'

The doctor had a cell to himself.

'Come on. Get up,' the sergeant shouted. The man was lying in his blood on the floor, a massive figure with a heavy head and bedraggled beard. He placed his two arms on to the seat of a wooden chair, gave himself a heave and got half upright. One more heave and he was on his feet. He flung wide his arms towards us.

'Why don't you kill me?' he whispered. 'Why don't you kill me? I can't stand any more.'

The same phrases dribbled out of his lips over and over again.

'He's been saying that all morning, the dirty bastard', the sergeant said. We went out into the sunshine. A number of other British soldiers were standing about, all with the same hard, rigid expressions on their faces, just ordinary English soldiers, but changed by this expression of genuine and permanent anger.

The crowds of men and women thickened as we went further into the camp. The litter of paper and rags and human offal grew thicker, the smell less and less bearable. At the entrance soldiers were unloading trucks filled with wooden latrines but these had not yet been placed about the camp, so many hundreds of half-naked men and women were squatting together in the open, a scene such as you sometimes see in India—except that here it was not always possible to distinguish men from women and indeed to determine whether or not they were human at all.

We drove through the filth in cars and presently emerging on to an open space of yellow clayey soil we came on a group of German guards flinging bodies into a pit about a hundred feet square. They brought the bodies up in handcarts and as they were flung into the grave a British soldier kept a tally of the numbers. When the total reached five hundred a bulldozer driven by another soldier came up and started nudging the earth into the grave. There was a curious pearly colour about the piled

up bodies and they were small like the bodies of children. The withered skin was sagging over the bones and all the normal features by which you know a human being had practically disappeared. Having no stomach for this sort of thing I was only able to look for a second or two, but the S.S. guards and even the British soldiers there appeared to have grown used to the presence of death and able to work in its presence without being sick.

'The doctors are doing a wonderful job,' the Captain said: 'They are in the huts all day sorting out the living bodies from the dead, and it's not easy sometimes to tell the difference. Of course there are a lot who are just hopeless and they are simply left. But they are saving a lot now. We have got in all the food we want—two meals a day at 10 and 6. Come on and have a look at one of the huts. We will go to the women first.'

It was a single story rectangular building, I suppose about a hundred feet long. Wooden bunks ran in tiers up to the ceiling and there was a narrow passage just wide enough to allow you to pass through. Since the majority of the women there were too weak to move and had no attention whatever, the stench was nauseating. Hurrying through, handkerchief to nose, one saw nothing but livid straining faces and emaciated arms and legs under the filthy bedclothes on either side. Many were using their last strength to moan feebly for help. These animals were piled one on top of the other to the ceiling, sometimes two to a bunk.

An old hag, somewhat stronger than the others, was standing at the further door. 'I'm twenty-one,' she whispered. 'No, I don't know why they put me in here. My husband is a doctor at the front—I'm German but not Jewish. I said that I did not want to enlist in the women's organization and they put me in here. That was eighteen months ago.'

'I've had enough of this,' I said to the Captain.

'Come on,' he said. 'You've got to go through one of the men's huts yet. That's what you're here for.'

It was, if anything, more rancid than the one I had seen, but this time I was too sick with the stench to notice much except the sound of the voices: 'Doctor, Doctor'.

As we returned towards the entrance the people around us were noticeably better in health than those at the pits and the huts. As they were able to walk some instinct drew the people away from the charnel houses and up and out towards the entrance

and the ordinary sane normal world outside. It was all like a journey down to some Dantesque pit, unreal, leprous and frightening. And now that one emerged into the light again, one's first coherent reactions were not of disgust or anger or even, I think, of pity. Something else filled the mind, a frantic desire to ask: 'Why? Why? Why? Why had it happened?' With all one's soul one felt 'This is not war. Nor is it anything to do with here and now, with this one place at this one moment. This is timeless and the whole world and all mankind is involved in it. This touches me and I am responsible. Why has it happened. How did we let it happen?'

We stood there in a group, a major from the commandos, a padre, three or four correspondents, having at first nothing to say and then gradually and quietly asking one another the unspoken question.

Was it sadism? No, on the whole, not. Or, if it was sadism, then it was sadism of a very indirect and unusual kind. Relatively little torture was carried out at this camp. The sadist presumably likes to make some direct immediate act which inflicts pain on other people. He could not obtain much satisfaction from the slow long process of seeing people starve.

Then again the Germans were an efficient people. They needed manpower. Can one imagine anything more inefficient than letting all this valuable labour go to rot? The prisoners in Belsen were not even obliged to work. They were simply dumped in here and left to make what shift they could with a twice daily diet of turnip stew. Incidentally this lack of work probably led to the break-up of the prisoners' morale as much as anything.

The Germans too, had a normal fear of disease spreading among themselves. And yet they let these thousands of bodies lie on the ground. It's true that there was not a great deal of typhus in the camp, but it had already broken out when the German commanders approached the British and offered to cede the camp under the terms of a truce.

It was not torture which had killed the prisoners. It was neglect. The sheer indifference of the Nazis. One began to see that the most terrible thing on earth is not positive destruction nor the perverse desire to hurt and destroy. The worst thing that can happen to you is for the master to say 'I do not care about you any more. I am indifferent'. Whether you washed or ate or laughed or died—none of this was of any consequence

any more because you as a person had no value. You were a slug on the ground, to be crushed or not to be crushed, it made no difference.

And having become attuned and accustomed to this indifference the guards were increasingly less affected by the suffering of the people around them. It was accepted that they should die. They were Russians. Russians die. Jews die. They were not even enemies. They were disease. Could you mourn or sympathize with the death throes of a germ?

Now here is where the evidence of Kramer, the camp commandant, comes in. To consider Kramer calmly I think we have first got to rid ourselves temporarily of our memory of that published picture of him shuffling across the yard in shackles. And we have to forget for a moment the title he was given through the world 'The Monster of Belsen'. A friend of mine, a trained intelligence officer and interrogator in the British army, went into the whole question very carefully with Kramer and this was Kramer's statement:

'I was swamped. The camp was not really inefficient before you crossed the Rhine. There was running water, regular meals of a kind—I had to accept what food I was given for the camp and distribute it the best way I could. But then they suddenly began to send me trainloads of new prisoners from all over Germany. It was impossible to cope with them. I appealed for more staff, more food. I was told this was impossible; I had to carry on with what I had. Then as a last straw the Allies bombed the electric plant which pumped our water. Cartloads of food were unable to reach the camp because of the Allied fighters. Then things really got out of hand. In the last six weeks I have been helpless. I did not even have sufficient staff to bury the dead, let alone segregate the sick.'

Thus Kramer.

'But how did you come to accept a job like this?' he was asked. The reply: 'There was no question of my accepting it. I was ordered. I am an officer in the S.S. and I obey orders. These people were criminals and I was serving my Führer in a crisis by commanding this camp. I tried to get medicines and food for the prisoners and I failed. I was swamped. I may have been hated, but I was doing my duty.'

There was some truth in this last. Not only were the prisoners

fond of hurling missiles at Kramer since we arrived, but his own guards turned on him as well. Kramer asked the British authorities that he should be segregated. He was told that in this event he would have to be shackled and to this he agreed.

Who then was responsible for Belsen and, for that matter, all the other camps? The S.S. guards? They say they were ordered. They hated the work but disobedience to Kramer meant death. Kramer says he was in precisely the same position. And so presumably do all the other Kramers above him until you reach Himmler. What does Himmler say? Himmler says he is serving his Führer. The Führer, of course, was innocent and knew nothing about the vulgar details (quite a number of Germans assured us of that). But—we can imagine Himmler saying—it was vital to protect the Führer from his enemies inside the Reich—the Jewish bolsheviks who would have cheerfully murdered him. At this dire crisis for Germany and the Party one could not be too nice about the details—possibly some people were treated a little too harshly. But one could not afford to take chances. The Nazis were perfectly prepared to treat these prisoners with humanity, but the enemies of Germany made this impossible. They destroyed communications, they blocked the food supply. Naturally the camps suffered.

But the people of Germany? Why had they allowed this thing to be? Why had they not protested? The average German answers: in the first place we did not know these camps existed. Secondly, how could we have protested? What possibly could we have done? The Nazis were too strong.

Very well then, why did you not protest when the Nazis were rising to power?

They answer: How could we foretell that the Nazis would end with this horror? When they first came to power they embarked on a programme that was excellent for Germany: new roads, modern buildings and machines. It seemed rational and good at the beginning. When we realized that Hitler was turning to war it was already too late. By then the Nazis had claimed our children. They were Nazified in the schools. A parent would be denounced by his own child if he spoke against the Nazis. Little by little we were overwhelmed and in the end it was too late. There was no point at which we could have effectively protested. Why did not foreign countries which had the power

check the Nazis soon enough? If only you had attacked us before the Nazis became too strong.

And so the blame is thrown back upon the world. No one anywhere is willing to take responsibility. Not the guard or the torturer. Not Kramer. Not Herr Woolf.¹ They were all ordered. Not Himmler or Hitler (the end justified the means); they were fighting to rid the world of the terrible menace of Jewish bolshevism—they were ordered by their high sense of duty. Not the German people. They too had to obey. And finally not the world. Is England Germany's keeper?

That is the line of argument which we have heard as observers of this final eclipse of Germany. I write it here not because I accept or reject it, but because we are still too close to the scene to do much more than report personally and directly; and it seems a pity to give way to the downright childishness of saying that all Germans are natural black-hearted fiends capable of murdering and torturing and starving people at the drop of the hat.

If I were compelled to make some sort of direct line at this moment I would say—Yes, all mankind *is* in some way responsible for Belsen but in varying degrees. Herr Woolf for example, is a cultured European. Surely he could have seen a little more clearly than say, the average German workman, what the Nazi party was going to mean and have made some protest in time. Clearly, too, the Germans generally and the leading Nazis most particularly are far more embroiled in this monstrosity than anyone else. The Junkers and the Wehrmacht power-through-war class—they too are utterly compromised. But the degree of guilt varies enormously both inside and outside of the Nazi Party, inside and outside of Germany. Probably the least of all to blame is the unpolitical boy who was put into uniform and forced to come here into the German battlefield to support the tardy conscience of the world. And die for it.

There is only one thing possible that one can do for him now—be vigilant to snap the long chains that lead to the future Belsens before they grow too strong. A shudder of horror went round the world when the news of these concentration camps was published, but only, I think, because of the special interest and the special moment in the war. We were engrossed with Germany and it is perhaps not too subtle to say that since Germany was

¹The German arms manufacturer whose opinions are paraphrased above.

manifestly beaten, people wanted to have a justification for their fight, a proof that they were engaged against evil. From the German point of view Belsen was perfectly mistimed. Worse camps like Ausschwitz existed in Poland and we took no notice. Dachau was described in the late 'thirties and we did not want to hear. In the midst of the war three quarters of a million Indians starved in Bengal because shipping was wanted in other parts and we were bored.

The last living patient has been evacuated from Belsen. The hateful buildings have been burned down. The physical evidence of all those horrible places will soon have been wiped out. Only the mental danger remains. The danger of indifference.

JACQUES DEBÛ-BRIDEL

THE POLITICAL CONDITION OF FRANCE

THERE is one fact which no impartial observer can contest: it is that the political life of France is concentrated round the personality of General de Gaulle. I purposely say round General de Gaulle and what he represents, not round his government: and there we enter upon one of the essential problems of our political life.

The Government, as it is now constituted, in spite of several alterations, has, in the opinion of the forty million French people who were obliged to submit to the German occupation, too long maintained the Committees which directed and motivated the resistance movement from London and Algiers, but which had, after all, no share in the life, sufferings and anxieties of the immense majority of the nation. The prestige and popularity of Charles de Gaulle are such that this restlessness has not yet expressed itself in conflict, but as the weeks pass, it is evident that we are witnessing a variance between the fighting forces of the French Resistance and the ministers entrusted with the direction of French affairs.

It must be added that not one of these ministers, however good his intentions, is capable of fulfilling the desires of the French nation.

After the liberation, France wished, in the first place, to participate in the war with an army worthy of her past and of her standing. However, at present, she has only a few divisions under her command on the field of battle.

The French people thought that, after the departure of the army of occupation, which pillaged them systematically, they would recover a normal standard of living. However, the food situation has never been so deplorable in the towns, and Paris has never endured such a rigorous winter, without a gramme of coal or of butter, and almost without meat.

The causes of discontent are manifold: the purge, the punishment of traitors and all those who collaborated with the Germans, was only performed in an unsystematic, sporadic fashion. Although several outstanding culprits in the press world have been sentenced, not one of the industrialists who made considerable fortunes out of working for the German war machine has yet been tried. Some wretched employees of Radio Paris, ordinary announcers, have been condemned to many years' hard labour, while writers like Henry de Montherlant, Chardonne and many others, who cynically and ostentatiously played the Germans' game, and paraded by the side of officers who had caused French hostages to be shot by the hundred, still enjoy an immunity which revolts the French masses.

In the country, officials of Price Control and men of the *Comités d'Organisation* who, on behalf of the Vichy Government and the German authorities, penalized, sentenced and pillaged the French peasantry, have remained at their posts. This is, of course, the chief cause of discontent amongst the peasants. To this must be added the fact that the Government has been unable or has not wished to take up a definite attitude on certain essential problems.

France does not know what her financial policy will be in the near future, and whether she will soon see the nationalization, demanded by the C.N.R., of the existing great monopolies: mines, insurance and electricity. The incertitude which reigns with regard to this subject is prolonged and increased by the Government's silence.

It would be an exaggeration to speak of a conflict between the Government and the Resistance. Nevertheless, as M. Bloch-Masquart, a member of the Conseil National de la Résistance, remarked the other day, this council, which has remained the principal voice of organized resistance movements, has only distant relations with the Government.

It is in the name of all France that General de Gaulle means to govern. However, through fear of appearing to be the instrument of that effective minority which was the Resistance, the Government is estranging the most active and the most devoted of the forces which for four years struggled for the liberation of the country. This the Government is doing without rallying the discontented, those men who, either for gain, or through weakness, or because of anti-democratism—men much more numerous in France than one thinks—submitted to Pétain's régime.

It would be a great mistake to imagine that Pétainism has been eradicated from our country, which was Bonapartist in its time.

General de Gaulle could not rally this anti-democratic section without repudiating the democratic principles of which he has made himself the herald, and which are those of the enormous majority of the French people.

The Government, in spite of many concessions, has not attracted more than half the supporters of the 1875 Constitution, those politicians of the old school, who would like again to see the parliament which abdicated in 1940 at Vichy, and M. Lebrun at the Elysée.

Certain men round General de Gaulle are flaunting the bogey of Communism and striving to resuscitate the old parties in order to divert him from his natural supporters, the militant masses of the resistance movements. M. Palewski, who is the political brain of the Government where home affairs are concerned, has conceived the preposterous idea of introducing into France a sort of lawful revolution, a Rooseveltian New Deal, based on two parties: the Popular Democrats, to the exclusion of the former right-wing parties, even tried patriots like Louis Marin, and the Socialist Party, to the exclusion of the Communists. This is indeed a rickety support to offer to General de Gaulle!

Nothing could be more artificial than the prevailing situation in the Government and in the assemblies of these two parties.

The Popular Democrat Party, which had a very small number

of members elected in 1936, represents only a tiny intellectual minority of the mass of French Catholics. They showed courage during the resistance, but they form a group which has no deep root in the country, despite the enthusiastic support of a fraction of the young clergy and of the Catholic syndicates.

As for the new Socialist Party, reorganized by the circle of M. Leon Blum, and composed mainly of his friends, it is also quite artificial. While the Socialist Party had about 150 deputies in 1936, M. Daniel Mayer's new party has excluded about 100 of them who were guilty of voting for Pétain in 1940, and it must be said that these former representatives have kept a considerable political following. The doctrinal intransigence of the new Socialist Party may perhaps be explained by the large number of ministerial posts which it holds, and is betrayed by the party's unacknowledged but fierce opposition to the Communists, in spite of the latter's efforts to promote united action of the working classes, and in spite of the existence of a *comité d'entente*. The tenacious prejudices of the Socialists against those who did not support Front Populaire in 1936 make of their party a restricted sect.

Perhaps the former parties are not as dead as the resistance movements think. It is undoubtedly the 'old machines'—of radicalism on the one hand, and of conservatism (Fédération Républicaine) on the other—which have kept their electoral supporters.

It is necessary today to give a special place to the Communist Party, which, by its courageous and effective action in the resistance movement and by its unwavering stand against the men of Vichy and the Germans in 1941, has achieved a completely new position, particularly in intellectual and bourgeois circles, where it was hitherto regarded as a bugbear.

This rise of Communism is unquestionable. It is certainly disquieting to a considerable section of French opinion. Anti-communism motivates many of the ruling circles as well as the majority of the leaders of the old parties.

It is by the menace of a Communist revolution that sympathisers of the Vichy régime echo the propaganda of the French at Siegmaringen, who are trying to discredit the Resistance.

The Resistance remains, apparently, one of the principal forces of the political life of France. Its division into multiple movements is the sole factor which has allowed the eclipse to which it has

been subjected. The two congresses of the two principal resistance movements, the Mouvement de la Libération Nationale (M.L.N.) and the Front National, recently held in Paris, have confirmed the vitality of these new forces. Although the Congress of the M.L.N., which counts 500,000 adherents (that is, much more than any French political party has ever numbered before), showed some rather deep divisions, it nevertheless has stated itself willing to federate with all the forces which have issued from the common struggle against Germany and dictatorship, in order to establish in France a truly social democracy free from control by trusts.

A third of M.L.N. even declared in favour of 'fusion' with the Front National.

The Front National, in spite of the composition of its directing committee, which comprises militant Catholics, and even such prelates as Monsignor Chevrot, the Reverend Fathers Philippe (Superior of the Carmelites) and Bienassis (of the Order of St. Dominic), not to mention M. François Mauriac—is, to many people, no more than an extension of the Communist Party.

Now, after the Front National Congress, this statement will be impossible. More than 1,800 delegates, representing over two million Frenchmen, revealed to observers the existence of a coherent movement of unsuspected power. The old political formulæ were greatly exceeded.

Besides noted Communists, more than twenty-five Catholic priests, some former radical ministers, and some qualified representatives of moderate parties, all declared their desire for a renewal in the political life of France. This desire is expressed by the co-operation of all the spiritual powers and all the energies of the nation to pursue the war effort and give France the great army which she needs at least to ensure her rights at the peace treaty, and to leave nothing undone for the material rebirth of a country covered with ruins.

Those who favour the old formulæ will protest once again that this is a sort of Neo-Fascism inspired by Communism; whereas it is simply the reflex of a nation which has just climbed out of an abyss, and which knows that it needs all its energy to repair its ruins and to regain its place in the world.

Is this union difficult to realize?

Certain questions still threaten to divide Frenchmen: notably that of the relation between Church and State in educational matters, and that of the extent of social reforms.

Yet many leaders of old political parties have demonstrated their agreement with the Front National formula for union: M. Louis Marin, leader of the French Conservative Party, M. Georges Bidault, Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Communist Party, with M. Marcel Cachin and M. Jacques Duclos, Senator Louis Goddard, the friend and successor of Edouard Herriot at Lyon, and M. Pierre Cot, my former political adversary and former Minister for Air.

Such a coalition can only survive by action and in action. It has been welded in suffering and in the comradeship of struggle against the invader. It will work with definite aims in view, not with impossible syntheses of contradictory programmes. It is towards action that it leads, and it is by action alone that it will assert itself. For the elections, it advocates a general list of Resistance candidates.

The attraction which the Front National exercises over other resistance movements is immense. Fear of Communism alone has hitherto retarded the fusion of the other movements with the Front National. The Socialists and the extreme right wing, automatically hostile to all social designs, are the chief enemies of the Front National.

I have no intention of dissimulating the important part played by the Communists in the formation of the Front National. At present, the Front National may be the channel through which Communism will become harmoniously integrated in the political life of France, thus bringing about the rebirth to which she aspires.

Another symptom of progress towards new, bold, and peaceable solutions is the reception of General de Gaulle at the Town Hall of Ivry by M. Maurice Thorez, who was but recently under sentence, unjust though it was.

In spite of difficulties, France is entering upon the road to renewal. This would be impossible without Communism, even as it would be impossible to accomplish it by Communism alone. It is essential for France to give Communism its place. That is the problem.

This essentially French move will doubtless facilitate, by means

of the alliance of Paris with Moscow, complementing that of London with Moscow, the Franco-Anglo-Russian collaboration which is indispensable to a peaceful Europe.

Any other solution to the home politics of France would be spurious. However good the intentions of the instigator, it would inevitably lead to the return to power of the forces and the men who for four years compromised with the Germans and the Vichy dictatorship.

This heavy mortage still weighs upon our public life. Our friends abroad must not lose sight of that; nor should they forget that Frenchmen of all parties have in their clandestine struggle learned to know the nobility and true patriotism of the militant Communists, who are, in France, the heirs of the old tradition of 1793 and 1848. It is, moreover, the reason why General de Gaulle has made room for them in the inner circle of his Government.

But if this gesture has no future, if the powerful forces of the workers find themselves once more rejected from national life, only to see the resumption of power by politicians who treated with Hitler—betrayed and discouraged, they would not hesitate to cast themselves into fierce opposition. It is the working class which, as the writer François Mauriac has declared, alone rose *in its entirety* in the struggle against the invader. In this struggle, the workers found themselves allied with the bourgeois resistance forces. A pact was made. If it were broken, no one can tell what the consequences would be. France is at a turning-point of her history. The liberation was for her a revolution. The question is whether class spirit will in future prevail against the desire for rebirth which is at present incarnated in the eyes of the people by Charles de Gaulle.

[Translated by NATALIA GALITZINE]

THIS article was written some months ago, and has been held up by the failure to materialise of an article commissioned at the same time and which was to have put the Right-Wing point of view. M. Debû-Bridel's remarks on Montherlant precede the official exoneration of him which Mr. Belgion describes on p. 72. M. Debû-Bridel was on the Executive Committee of the Resistance Movement and edits *Front National*.

ANDRÉ MASSON

A CRISIS OF THE IMAGINARY

To look for the unusual at all cost or to shun its appeal, to refer to the *natural*¹ or to protest against it, is not the question. A picture always relates to the Imaginary. Jean Paul Sartre proves this irrefutably in an important work of this name.

The reality of a picture is only the sum of the elements which compose it: canvas, coloured paints, varnish.... But what it expresses is necessarily something *unreal*. And we might add that the artist, whatever pretext he may have for his work, always makes his appeal to the imagination of other people.

Once this is understood, all discussion about the pre-eminence of the super-real over the real (or the contrary) falls flat. Since a picture is in essence something *unreal*, what is the point of giving the advantage to the dream over reality? A victory for the ambiguous.

For instance the surrealist painters implicitly recognise the supremacy of the pictorial imagination over the *imitation of poetry* since they admire Georges Seurat more than Gustave Moreau or Redon. The former, entirely preoccupied by problems relating to his profession, has used only scenes of everyday life for subject-matter: Sunday walks (from which neither the nursemaid nor the soldier is omitted), circuses, fair scenes, the pleasures of the most ordinary citizen—a model undressing, a woman powdering herself. Each picture was preceded by numerous studies 'from nature'. And let us not forget the method: the dot, the most deliberate and considered of techniques: automatic to the least possible degree. But the 'subject' is a secondary affair and what does it matter if the artist lets himself be carried away by dreams. The dreams of Goya are the equal of his observations.

The childish mistake has been to believe 'that to choose a certain number of precious stones and to write down their names on paper was the same, even if well done, as *making* precious stones. Certainly not. As poetry consists of creating, we must take from

¹'La grande odalisque,' by Ingres, is no more *natural* than a still life by Georges Braque.

the human soul moods and lights of such absolute purity that well sung and well displayed, they really constitute the jewels of man... This remark of Mallarmé condemning one kind of literature can be applied very well to a certain kind of painting.

In fact, the mistake is to believe that there is anything except the intrinsic value of a work: the personal flavour it gives out, the new emotion it displays and the pleasure it gives.

A work of art is not written information. Read again in the inexhaustible *Curiosités esthétiques* the passage summing up the failure of Grandville: 'He has touched on several important questions but finished by falling between two stools, being neither absolutely a philosopher nor an artist... By means of his drawings he took down the succession of dreams and nightmares with the precision of a stenographer who is writing out the speech of a public speaker...' but 'as he was an artist by profession and a man of letters by his head' he has not known how to give all that a sufficiently plastic form.

In fact, once the raw materials offered by chance or by experience, by the known or by the unknown are collected together, the only thing left is... to begin.

It is far from my aim to present favourable arguments to those who accuse some contemporary artists of representing monsters on their canvases. For these people are most unwelcome who, spurred on by the basest interest or by the blindest grievance, helped to drive the day out of our sky and made it possible for funereal hallucinations and the chilling dreams of a Kafka to become daily reality. Reactionary critics will do this in vain: disturbed periods have their beast-fighters and their apocalypses. Nevertheless, should we not realise that he who is neither a poet, nor a visionary, nor an artist and who sets to work to fabricate the 'fantastic' is dishonouring the profession: The meeting of the umbrella and the sewing-machine on the operating table happened only once. Traced, repeated over and over again, mechanized, the unusual vulgarizes itself. A painful 'fantasy' can be seen in the street shop-windows.

* * *

People talk a lot about abstraction with reference to contemporary painting. I do not know at what point in a work of art the critics decide that it begins or ends. Perhaps a painter will be

allowed to suggest that this term abstract should be reserved for metaphysical discussions: a domain in which this notion—it is at home there—has provoked brilliant controversies from Aristotle to Husserl and Whitehead.

The absence of subject—the picture itself considered as an object—this aesthetic is perfectly defensible.

However, the fear of painters who lay claim to it: the fear of making reference to the outer world forms a curious parallel to the fear of those who will not compromise with the irrational: that of not being surprising enough.

Now, it is not enough to draw or to paint a few cylinders or rectangles in a certain assembled order to be out of the world. The demon of analogy, in a sly mood that day, may whisper to us that there is an involuntary allusion here to ordinary, commonplace, recognizable objects.

In the same way it is not enough to introduce a rapturous passage into a mediocre form nor to descend into the frontiers of the invertebrate to escape conformism, nor again to convince oneself that to achieve originality it is sufficient to bow to the Hegelian contradiction.¹

Extremes cannot enslave genius; on the contrary genius contains and masters them. To place oneself on one end of the map of art waving a laughable working drawing, or on the other end offering a soliciting anecdote—mistakenly rivalling the engineer or parodying the psychiatrist—only results in installing oneself comfortably on the lower slopes of the mind.

The columns of the storm, the pure pediment and the peaks hold sway far above this.

¹ 'We must not take the word contradiction in the mistaken sense in which Hegel used it and which he made others and contradiction itself believe that it had a creative power.' (Kierkegaard.)

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H. H. PRICE

THE THEORY OF TELEPATHY¹

THERE can be no doubt that this is the most exciting book on Psychical Research since Mr. Dunne's *Experiment with Time*. It is intended for the general reader as well as for the expert; and the general reader will have no difficulty in understanding it, even if he has no previous knowledge of the subject. Mr. Carington writes in an admirably clear and informal style, with a minimum of technical terms; and when he does use technical terms, he always defines them first. The book is divided into three parts: I 'Facts', II 'Theory', and III 'Implications.' The second is the most important and original, the third the most speculative, while the first is an excellent brief sketch of the evidence, both observational and experimental—evidence to which Mr. Carington himself has made a very distinguished contribution.

Telepathy was defined by F. W. H. Myers as 'the communication of impressions of any kind from one mind to another independently of the recognized channels of sense'. Is there any fact in Nature which corresponds to this definition? It seems to be quite certain that there is. Ever since the foundation of the Society for Psychical Research in 1882 a vast mass of evidence has been collected, both by members of the Society and by other workers all over the world. No open-minded person who troubles to read the published Proceedings of the S.P.R., or such works as *Phantasms of the Living* by Gurney, Myers and Podmore, can reasonably doubt that Telepathy does really occur, and that it occurs in the most diverse forms, ranging from the transference of some trivial thought or mental image at one end to the full-blown 'Crisis Apparition' at the other. For a long period, however, the evidence consisted almost entirely of what are called spontaneous cases. It is true that a certain amount of experimental work was done, even in the quite early days, but it was sporadic and unco-ordinated. It has only been undertaken

¹ *Telepathy: an outline of its Facts, Theory and Implications*: by W. Whately Carington. (Methuen & Co., London, 1945, pp. xiii, 176. 12s. 6d. net.)

in a large-scale and systematic way in quite recent years. Before this, it was always possible for the sceptic to say that the facts could be accounted for by the hypothesis of chance-coincidence especially if he had not bothered to examine the evidence in detail. One could reply, and rightly, that when the evidence *was* examined in detail, the coincidence hypothesis was not reasonably credible. If Mr. A. has an accident and at approximately the same time Mrs. A., a hundred miles away, has a vision which is later found to correspond accurately with the facts; and if the same kind of thing is found to happen in a large number of other instances: then we may reasonably say that the odds against chance-coincidence are overwhelmingly great. All the same, we cannot say *how* great they are: we cannot say, for instance, that they are 500 to 1 or 1,000 to 1. For we have no means of estimating what the *a priori* probability is that such a correspondence between a vision and a physical fact would occur by chance alone. But if we experiment with artificially simplified material, such as playing-cards or simple drawings, we can estimate how often, in the long run, the 'percipient' ought to be right if chance alone were operative. Thus with an ordinary pack of playing-cards the frequency of correct guesses, if chance alone were operative, would be approximately 1 in 52. And if the proportion of correct guesses, over a long period, is considerably in excess of this figure, a statistician can work out how great the odds are that the result is not due to chance alone; in other words, he can estimate just how probable it is that some factor other than chance coincidence is operative.

A very large number of experiments on these lines have been carried out in recent years, especially since the publication of Dr. J. B. Rhine's *Extra-sensory Perception* in 1934, and Mr. Carington himself has been one of the principal experimenters. Several very interesting results have emerged. In the first place, the chance-coincidence hypothesis has been refuted as completely as any hypothesis of the kind can be. Secondly (and this is something which the study of spontaneous cases could not in itself have established) it has been shown that a large number of perfectly ordinary people have a mild degree of telepathic power, in that their 'scores' are significantly higher than mere chance would account for, though few seem to have it in a high degree. Thirdly, and most interesting of all, Telepathy appears to be

independent of time to some extent, as well as of space. It has been shown that percipients make significantly high scores not merely on the card, diagram, etc., which is being looked at by the experimenter at the moment, but also on the one which he *was* looking at a short time before; and still more surprisingly, on the one which he is *going* to look at a short time after. In other words, it has been discovered that Telepathy is both retrocognitive and precognitive. This temporal 'displacement effect', as it is called, was discovered by Mr. Carington himself, and has since been confirmed by Mr. Soal. Spontaneous cases of Precognition (Mr. Dunne's among others) were, of course, already known. But it had not previously been possible to investigate Precognition experimentally, nor to submit the results to statistical assessment. Moreover, it had been taken for granted that Telepathy and Precognition were two completely independent phenomena. It had not been suspected that Precognition might be, so to speak, an aspect of Telepathy.

A consequence of a more technical kind is worth noticing at this point. Once Precognitive Telepathy is admitted, the sharp distinction drawn by early students of the subject between Telepathy and Clairvoyance becomes questionable. By 'Clairvoyance' is meant the awareness of physical objects and events by some means other than normal sensation and inference. Now suppose that someone has an ostensibly clairvoyant cognition of an object O (say a lost key or the contents of an unopened parcel). Either the cognition is subsequently verified or it is not. If it is not verified, we have no evidence that it was a case of clairvoyance at all. If it *is* verified, someone must subsequently have a normal perception of the object O. But if so, the ostensible clairvoyance might have been precognitive telepathy. What the ostensible clairvoyant was aware of might have been, not the physical object O itself, but a future perceptual experience in the mind of the verifier. In view of this, it is not at all easy to devise an experiment by which the occurrence of 'pure' clairvoyance might be established. Indeed at first sight it appears impossible to devise one. We might of course, arrange that a series of objects, unseen by anyone at the time, should be mechanically introduced into some receptacle. We might arrange that their successive presence there, and the successive guesses of the percipient, should be mechanically recorded. Even so,

the experimenter himself must eventually look at both records in order to compare them. Thus he will eventually know which object was in the receptacle on which occasion, and this future knowledge of his might have been precognitively 'picked up' by the percipient. But suppose that the mechanically made records told us only the *aggregate* of hits and the *aggregate* of misses, in such a way that no one could ever discover which guess corresponded to which object. Then if the aggregate of hits was significantly greater than chance-coincidence would account for, we should have experimental evidence of 'pure' clairvoyance; precognitive telepathy would have been excluded. Various ingenious devices, some of them electrical rather than strictly mechanical, have been suggested for this purpose. Some have actually been constructed. Mr. Carington mentions one of them, invented by Mr. G. N. M. Tyrrell, the present President of the S.P.R. There have, however, been others, notably those of Mr. Redmayne and Mr. Denys Parsons, and several more have been projected though not yet constructed. With these devices, some investigators have obtained positive results and others (up to the present) only chance results. It is to be hoped that when normal conditions return this work will be continued on as large a scale as possible.

So much for the empirical evidence. Whatever may be said about Clairvoyance, it is clear that the evidence for Telepathy, both spontaneous and experimental, is very strong indeed. But though the *facts* of Telepathy seem unshakeable, nobody has hitherto suggested a satisfactory theory to explain it. The most signal merit of Mr. Carington's book is that he does suggest one.

The plain man no doubt thinks that Telepathy is a kind of 'wireless'; i.e. that it is to be explained by some sort of physical radiation passing from one brain to another. There seem to be insuperable objections to any such explanation. All known radiations obey the Inverse Square law, in other words their intensity decreases as the square of the distance; but Telepathy seems to be independent of distance in space. If it is also independent of time in some degree (as we have seen there is reason to think) the 'wireless' analogy is still further weakened. What kind of a wireless apparatus could it be which picks up future

messages, *before* they have been sent off? Again, there is no trace in the human brain of any organ for receiving or emitting the supposed radiations. Finally, in wireless transmissions some kind of a 'code' must be used. The thoughts or emotions of the sender must first be translated, according to a pre-arranged convention, into words; and the words again, by means of a second pre-arranged convention, must be translated into electrical impulses. And then at the receiver's end there must be a corresponding double process of de-coding. There is no trace of anything of this kind in Telepathy.

If a physical explanation seems hopeless, we must obviously try a psychological one; and various people have suggested the hypothesis of a common subconscious. As to their conscious part, all minds are separate individuals; but in their subconscious part, or at least in its deeper levels, they are perhaps not separate at all. As F. W. H. Myers put it, they might be like mountainous islands all joined together by a submarine continent. Mr. Carington in effect adopts this suggestion, but he introduces a modification of crucial importance. For the hypothesis as it stands is much too vague. It does not explain why just *this* idea (rather than any other you please) should be telepathically communicated on a particular occasion; nor does it explain why Jones in particular, rather than someone else, should be the recipient of it. Mr. Carington's theory does explain these things.

His suggestion is that Telepathy is a special case of the very familiar process called the Association of Ideas. Suppose that two objects K and O come before someone's mind at about the same time. Then if he thinks of K at some later time, he will tend to think of O as well. Now hitherto it has always been assumed that such an association of two ideas could occur only within the boundaries of one individual mind. Mr. Carington suggests that this assumption is false, and that association of ideas may operate *across* the boundaries of an individual mind. Thus if I associate the two ideas K and O in the manner described, and you subsequently think of K, then *you* will tend to think of O. Just as K henceforth reminds me of O, so also it will 'remind' *you* of O—although it was I, not you, who originally experienced the two things in conjunction. The phrase 'K idea' is used by Mr. Carington as a technical term. I suppose he chose it because the reminding idea, in the traditional theory of the Association

of Ideas, is sometimes called the 'cue.' A K idea is any idea that functions as a cue in a trans-individual association of this sort.

It will be observed that if this theory of Telepathy is correct, nothing whatever is literally transferred from me to you; and the prefix 'tele' is to that extent misleading. Mr. Carington would say, I think, that the notion of the transference or passage of an idea from one mind to another is the chief obstacle to an understanding of the phenomena. This notion would only be appropriate if some theory of the 'wireless' type were correct. It does make sense to say that something is transferred, or passes through space, from one *brain* to another, since brains are material objects and do have positions in space; though even then it would not be the idea itself which passed through space, but a hypothetical radiation of some sort, alleged to correspond to it. But if a psychological theory (such as the association theory) be the correct explanation we cannot literally speak of a passage or transference at all. For minds are not spatial entities, as brains are, and one cannot really attach any clear meaning to the statement that an idea passes or is transferred from one *mind* to another. Nothing really 'passes' at all. All that happens is that before a certain moment I am aware of an idea O and you are not; whereas after that moment we are both aware of it. And the explanation, according to Mr. Carington, is that the 'cue' idea K is already in the minds of both of us; it is associated for me with the idea O; and since an associative linkage (once it has been established) is trans-individually operative, it 'reminds' *you* of the idea O.

Let us consider how this theory applies to Mr. Carington's own experiments. The experimenter draws a simple picture, for instance a picture of a cat, and pins it up in his study, where it remains for a period of—say—ten hours. (As a matter of fact, he need not actually draw it. It is sufficient if he thinks of it attentively, and the act of drawing is only important because it helps him to do this. But we will assume that he does draw it.) At some time during those ten hours, various 'percipients', who have no normal means of knowing what the picture is, attempt to reproduce it telepathically. Suppose that one of them succeeds. What has happened? According to Mr. Carington, there is some K idea in the mind of the experimenter, and it is associated for him with the idea of Cat; the same K idea is in the mind of

the percipient, having come there not telepathically but in a perfectly 'normal' manner. And since the associative linkage, once established, operates trans-individually, the percipient too, will think of the idea of Cat, and will proceed to draw a picture of a cat himself on the sheet of paper with which he has been provided. Now what is the K idea in this case? Mr. Carington answers, it is just the idea of the experiment itself. This is common to the two people. It is bound to be in the mind of the experimenter when he makes his drawing, and will obviously be associated with the thing that he draws. It is also bound to be in the mind of the percipient when *he* sits down to draw (he knows very well that he is taking part in a Telepathy experiment); and so the idea associated with it—the idea of Cat in this case—will tend to come into his mind as well.

Now at first sight it may appear that this explanation proves too much, so to speak. If it were right, we may think, all telepathic experiments ought to be 100 per cent successes. All the percipients ought to reproduce the drawing successfully, since the relevant K idea, the idea of the experiment, is in the minds of all. But what we actually find is that although there are some 'hits' (a greater proportion than chance alone would account for) there are also many 'misses'. The answer to this is that the associative linkage of K and O is not an all-or-none affair. It is a matter of degree. Obviously this is true of the ordinary familiar sort of association. If K and O have been conjoined in my experience, I shall *tend* to think of O when K is presented to my mind. But the tendency may be quite a feeble one. For example, K may have other associates besides O, and one of these may come up instead. Moreover, K will not be the only idea before my mind at the moment. There will always be others as well, each with its own associates, so that O may be so to speak crowded out. It may also be crowded out not by other ideas but by sensations, especially if they are vivid or painful (the sensation of toothache is an extreme example). In short, we must remember what psychologists call 'the narrowness of consciousness'. We must conceive that at any given moment many different ideas are competing for entrance into consciousness, and only some of them can get in.

Again, when we say that a certain K idea is common to the two minds (experimenter and percipient) this 'commonness' too is a matter of degree, and not a matter of all or none. The idea of the

experiment, for instance, is not a simple entity. It is very complex. According to Mr. Carington himself, it is a complex constellation of mental images with associative links between them. I think that this is actually an over-simplified view of the nature of ideas; but however this may be, the idea is certainly something complex. Now when two minds are thinking of the 'same' idea (as we say) the sameness is not necessarily complete. There will of course be some overlap; *some* constituents will have to be common to your idea and mine. Otherwise there would be no sense in saying that we were both thinking of the 'same' thing at all. But the degree of overlap or sameness may vary within very wide limits; and it will probably be lower when the idea is relatively abstract (as the 'idea of the experiment' is) than when it is relatively concrete, like the idea of St. Paul's Cathedral.

Lastly, in some cases there may be *several* K ideas operating at the same time, whereas in other cases there may be only one. In one of Mr. Carington's early experiments (before the theory had been invented at all) the percipients were given a photograph of the experimenter's study with a blank piece of paper pinned up on the wall. According to the theory, this should have acted as an additional K idea, reinforcing the 'idea of the experiment'. Apparently it did, since it was found that the percipients' scores were appreciably better than they were in other experiments where no photograph was distributed.

These considerations are important, not merely because they remove a *prima facie* objection to the theory, but for another reason as well. It is not sufficient to explain why telepathic communications sometimes succeeds; it is also essential to explain why it sometimes fails. The usual explanation hitherto has been in terms of the somewhat mysterious notion of 'telepathic rapport'. It has been thought that the degree of rapport between two people might vary within wide limits; it might be strong, or feeble, or non-existent. And it has generally been supposed that it was in some way emotional. Now this conception is in itself a very vague one; but in the light of the considerations just mentioned, it can be made much more precise and intelligible. 'Rapport', according to Mr. Carington, is to be defined in terms of K ideas. When we say that the rapport between Smith and Jones is strong, we mean that they have *many* K ideas in common, and/or that Smith's 'version' of a certain K idea which they both share has *many*

constituents in common with Jones' version of it. Rapport, in other words, is nothing more nor less than like-mindedness. As for emotion, Mr. Carington thinks that its effects are only secondary and indirect; it is in no sense the 'propulsion force' in Telepathy. It is only relevant because of its influence upon attention. If I have an emotional interest in a certain pair of ideas, I shall be likely to attend to them repeatedly, and the associative linkage between them will be strengthened in consequence.

Such, in outline, is Mr. Carington's theory of Telepathy, the most important and the most original thing in his book. It is beautifully simple and economical. The Association of Ideas is a process which is perfectly familiar to all of us. There is nothing mysterious or occult or 'metaphysical' about it. Its laws have been studied for a long time, and are fairly well understood. The only new assumption we have to make is a negative one, the removal of a restriction; and the restriction which we are asked to remove is not in any way self-evident or necessary. We merely have to assume that Association of Ideas is a process which is not confined within the boundaries of the individual mind, but so to speak cuts across them; so that an associative link which is *formed* in one mind may thereafter be *operative* in another mind. The theory is indeed so simple that its very simplicity may be an obstacle to our understanding of it, as Mr. Carington remarks himself; in the same way, the very simplicity of Copernicus' theory of the celestial motions made it difficult to grasp when it was first propounded. The only serious objection I can think of is this. Suppose that the idea which is to be 'Telepathized' is one which the percipient has never had before. Imagine for example that he is a person who has been blind from birth, and that the idea to be telepathized is the idea of Red. Let the 'rapport' between the two parties be as strong as you like; and let the associative linkage between the K ideas and the idea of Red is as strong as you like in the mind of the telepathic agent. Even so, can we suppose that the idea of Red will arise in the mind of the percipient, assuming that he has been blind from birth? If it does, he will acquire this idea without ever having had the corresponding sensation. This would be a most paradoxical occurrence; and the empiricist philosophers (among whom, as we shall see, Mr. Carington himself is to be included) would say that it is indeed impossible. They may of course be wrong. It may

be that in the circumstances I have described the blind man *would* in fact get the idea of Red (it should be possible to settle the question by experiment). But if so, Hume's principle that 'all ideas are derived from impressions' will have to be modified and restated in a more general form, just as the laws of Association have been restated in a more general form by Mr. Carington. It will have to read somehow as follows: 'when an idea is in any mind, a corresponding sense-impression must have previously existed in *some* mind' (but not necessarily in the same one). Thus if we lump the contents of all minds together, it might still be true that all ideas are derived from impressions; but it would not necessarily be true if we considered a single mind separately.

Mr. Carington's theory was of course suggested by his own *experimental* investigations. Having stated it, the first thing he has to do is to show how it will apply equally well to 'spontaneous cases'. Let us consider the most striking sort, the Telepathic Phantasm or Crisis Apparition. We will take the type of instance I mentioned earlier. Mr. A, who is away from home, meets with an accident. Let us suppose that he is drowned. Mrs. A, who has no normal knowledge of what has happened, sees a vivid vision of Mr. A falling into the water or clad in dripping wet clothes; and it is subsequently found that the vision was approximately simultaneous with the accident. If this is to be explained by the Association Theory, we must obviously find some K idea which is common to the two people, and present in the minds of both at the appropriate moment. There are several possibilities. The K idea might be Mr. A's idea of himself; it might be his idea of Mrs. A; it might be his idea of his home or of a certain room in it. Any of those ideas, or all of them, might be in his mind and would therefore be associated, for him, with the idea of the accident which is befalling him at the moment. These same ideas, some or all of them, might also be in the mind of Mrs. A. She may be thinking about her absent husband. She may be seeing her home or that particular room in it. And the idea of herself is always present to her, in the background of her mind at any rate. Therefore the idea of the accident will come into her mind too, and by a fairly familiar psychological mechanism it manifests itself in the form of a visual hallucination. In other cases, it might manifest itself in other ways: in the form of a hallucinatory voice, or of a dream, or even of a motor automatism, such as automatic

writing. The particular form of manifestation adopted will depend on the psychological make-up of the percipient. A full-blown visual phantasm, appearing externally in physical space, is merely the most striking type of instance.

Another type of spontaneous case is the phenomenon of Haunting (a recurrent and localized apparition). It has long been suspected that Haunting might be a telepathic phenomenon; especially as it has been found that the 'ghost' is sometimes the ghost of a *living* person who formerly inhabited the house—or, in one very odd case at least, the ghost of a living person who is *going* to inhabit the house in future. When the 'ghost' is the ghost of a dead person, we may either suppose that his mind still survives and is still thinking of some past incident in his life on earth; or we may suppose that the telepathic 'agent' is merely some past thought of his, in which case the telepathy would be introcognitive. But what is the K idea? According to Mr. Carington, it is just the idea of a certain room or other place which the 'agent' (dead or alive, past or present) *associates* with a certain action or incident which once occurred there. By hypothesis, this K idea will be in the mind of the percipient also, since he is actually in the room or place in question. Therefore the idea of the associated action or incident will tend to come into his mind as well; and in favourable conditions it will externalize itself in the form of a sensory hallucination, visual, auditory, etc., as the case may be.

From these immediate applications of his theory Mr. Carington turns to others which are admittedly more speculative. They are the subject matter of Part III of the book ('Implications'). He prepares the way for them by giving what he calls 'a provisional sketch of the mind' in chapter 9. Here, as he is well aware, he is crossing the Rubicon. He is passing over the boundary which separates Science from Philosophy; for Psychical Research is in principle a branch of Science, and the Association Theory of Telepathy is a scientific hypothesis, designed to colligate a certain body of empirical data, and amenable to experimental tests. The philosophical theory which he proposes is a form of Neutral Monism, more or less on the laws of Lord Russell's *Analysis of Mind*. He abolishes not only the Pure Ego, but also the various types of 'mental acts'—acts of awareness, acts of will, etc.—in which philosophers have commonly believed. He holds that sensa

(sense-data, sensation-contents) are the common constituents both of mind and of matter. In addition, mind consists of images. In fact, a mind is in his view nothing but a very complex constellation of sensa and images, linked together by associative bonds. It has no other constituents at all. Emotions are reduced to organic sensa (this is the celebrated James-Lange theory of emotion) and conations—acts of desiring and of willing—are reduced to sensa of muscular strain. Mr. Carington introduces the word 'psychon' to cover both sensa and images. Accordingly he says that a mind is nothing more nor less than a system of psychons. Consciousness is merely a name for certain relations between one psychon and others; there is no ego or self which is conscious of them all. Consciousness may be compared with Space, which is merely a name for certain relations between material particles. (It would have been more plausible, perhaps, to say that consciousness is an emergent property, qualifying a set of interrelated psychons as a whole.)

These notions, queer as they may be, do have certain theoretical advantages. They enable Mr. Carington to maintain that the unity of a mind is a matter of degree, since the relations between its constituent psychons may have various degrees of tightness or looseness. In this way we can make sense of such phenomena as dissociated and alternating personality, autonomous and semi-autonomous repressed complexes, and even of the queer behaviour which led people in former ages to speak of 'demonic possession'. On the Pure Ego theory, which regards the mind as a simple and indivisible substance (the *res cogitans* of Descartes), these things are excessively paradoxical, and indeed it would seem that they *ought* to be quite impossible; whereas if a mind be merely a system of psychons they are just what we should expect.

Likewise, we can maintain that the separateness of one mind from another is a matter of degree, as well as the unity of any given mind. Two minds might overlap, i.e. they might have a certain sub-group of psychons in common, as Telepathy seems to require. Or they might both be included in a larger mind; just as two alternating personalities, each possessing a considerable degree of separateness and autonomy, can be included within a single mind. If we imagine a number of minds (psychon systems) with a very intimate telepathic linkage between them, they would *ipso facto* constitute a sort of group-mind or super-mind. In this way we might attempt to explain the behaviour of crowds and even

of nations. We might likewise explain the behaviour of certain social insects, such as ants and bees. We might even conceive that there is a kind of Mind of Humanity, a group-mind for the human race as a whole. We might say that in mystical experience the individual becomes aware of this group-mind which includes himself and all other human individuals; and on this basis we might erect a new and 'telepathized' version of Comte's Religion of Humanity, as Mr. Carington does in chapter 12—though I am afraid the hard-boiled theist will find it a little tepid.

What are we to think of these queer speculations? Admittedly they are no more than speculations. Mr. Carington is quite well aware that they are in no way entailed by the empirical facts of Telepathy which he has expounded in Part I. Nor are they in any way entailed by the *theory* of Telepathy which he has put forward in Part II, and the reader must not think that they are. (Mr. Carington ought not really to have called them 'Implications'.) The Association Theory of Telepathy, as I have said already, is a scientific hypothesis. The Psychon Theory of Mind, with the conclusions deduced from it, is a philosophical speculation: suggested, no doubt, by the Association Theory, but in no way a logical consequence of it. It is important to insist on this point, and to see that the Association Theory of Telepathy stands or falls on its own merits, whether Mr. Carington's philosophy of mind, or of Ants, or of Religion be acceptable or not. He himself sees this clearly, but the hasty reader might well overlook it.

For my part, I must confess that the Psychon Philosophy does not seem to me very satisfactory. Where Hume and Mach and Russell have failed, it does not seem to me that Mr. Carington has succeeded. Such a theory might well be adequate for the primitive mental activities which we share with the animals: sensation, perception, perceptual recognition, habitual action. But I do not see how it is to be applied to the higher mental activities at all. Despite the efforts of Hume and Lord Russell, its account of *conceptual* cognition is most sketchy and unsatisfactory. (It is very difficult to suppose that a concept is nothing but a group of interrelated images.) I do not see what it is going to say about knowledge by description—as opposed to knowledge by acquaintance—or about the entertaining of propositions, or about deductive reasoning; or again about volitional activities which have a conceptual element in them, such as

deliberation and choice. Nor do I believe that such a theory can give any satisfactory account of memory-knowledge—remembering *that* . . . as opposed to remembering *how to* . . .—and self-consciousness (a hard fact if ever there was one) seems to me to defeat it altogether. It has been said that Russell's *Analysis of Mind* is a very good analysis of the mind of Russell's cat, but not at all a good analysis of the mind of Russell.

We must not, however, conclude that Mr. Carington's Psychon Philosophy is altogether worthless. These arguments only show that it is not a *complete* philosophy of the mind or the self. But it, or something like it, may still be a very good working philosophy of Psychical Research. Such a working philosophy—something more comprehensive than an ordinary empirically-testable hypothesis but less comprehensive than a complete philosophical system—is very badly needed at the present stage in the development of the subject; indeed I do not think that Psychical Researchers can now make much progress, if any, without it. The situation as I see it is this. We are all of us, consciously or unconsciously, dominated by the philosophy of Descartes, which—with minor tinkерings and amendments—has been the prevailing outlook of educated Europeans from the seventeenth century to the twentieth, and the theoretical basis of the scientific civilization which has been developed in those centuries. Now the Cartesian conception of mind, which regards every mind as a separate and indivisible 'thinking substance', is as great an obstacle to the progress of Psychical Research as the Cartesian conception of matter has lately become in Physics. If Descartes were right, such phenomena as Telepathy and Precognition simply ought not to happen. They do not fit in to the Cartesian universe at all; which is the reason why so many people are sure that these queer phenomena *cannot* happen, however strong the evidence for them is. Therefore, if we are to make any sense of them, we must abandon the Cartesian conception of mind: a very difficult thing to do, and one which requires a kind of revolution in our socially inherited ways of thinking. And I agree with Mr. Carington that our first step must be to 'change the unit', so to speak. We must no longer take as our unit the individual mind, as Descartes would have us do, but rather the individual *idea*; and we must suppose that each individual idea is endowed with certain intrinsic causal properties and a certain autonomy, so that it can exist and operate 'on its own',

and is independent, at least in some measure, of the consciousness in which it originates. An individual mind, such as the mind of you or me, must be considered as a somewhat precarious aggregate, whose internal unity, and likewise its separateness from other minds, are dependent on special conditions which normally, but not always, prevail; and even at the best its unity and its separateness from other minds are matters of degree.

All this of course is in harmony with Mr. Carington's views, though the terminology is a little different. And for purposes of Psychical Research such a theory will probably be quite sufficient. (Certainly it or something like it seems indispensable, whether sufficient or not.) But if we are to have a *complete* philosophy of Human Personality, or even a theory of the 'higher' sorts of normal cognitive activity, I am afraid we may have to introduce the Pure Ego again, painful as it may be. What we must do, I believe, is to abandon the bi-partite division of human nature into body and mind—another Cartesian inheritance—and go back to the older tri-partite division, which is found in various terminological disguises in the Classical Hindu thinkers, in the Neoplatonists and in some forms of Christian theology: the division into 1. body, 2. mind (or soul, $\psi \chi \eta$) and 3. spirit. We can then say that Psychical Research, and indeed Psychology in general, is concerned with the second member of the triad, mind or soul, and not at all with the third. It is mind or soul, not spirit, whose components are semi-autonomous ideas or 'psychons'. It is mind or soul, not spirit, which is the somewhat precarious aggregate mentioned above, and whose internal unity and separateness from other minds or souls are matters of degree. And finally Telepathy is a relation between minds or souls; as the body (apparently) has nothing to do with it on the one side, so also the spirit or ego has nothing to do with it on the other—except to be *aware of* the 'telepathized' idea when once it has presented itself.

I have left to the end Mr. Carington's discussion of Survival (chapter 11) which is in some ways the most interesting theory in the book. I have done so because I think it is not necessarily bound up with his Psychon Philosophy. Almost everything he says on the subject would still stand if in addition to the system of 'psychons' there were an ego or *Atman* (spirit, self) which owns them and is aware of them. The most remarkable feature of this

chapter is Mr. Carington's conception of the question which is to be answered. It is commonly supposed that the question is 'do we survive death?' According to Mr. Carington this question is a misleading one, and cannot possibly be answered with a straight Yes or No. It is virtually certain, he says, that in *some* sense we do survive death. The phenomenon of Telepathy in itself establishes this, in his opinion. As we have seen, Telepathy is almost certainly a non-physical process, independent of space and even in some degree independent of time. Thus the very existence of Telepathy shows that in some respects at any rate the mind is capable of operating independently of the body. The real question therefore is not whether we survive death, but in what sense and to what degree do we survive it. Immediately after Smith's death, the system of psychons which is Smith's mind will certainly be in existence, according to Mr. Carington. But how long will it last, and how much of it will last? That is the question. In other words, we have to ask how *stable* a system of psychons is likely to be when the supply of fresh sensa has been cut off by the cessation of physiological stimuli.

Mr. Carington takes a somewhat roseate view on this point. The system of psychons which is Smith's mind is held together, as we have seen, by associative linkages; and he thinks that when once two psychons have been linked together in this way the linkage is probably unbreakable, so that when once any psychon has got itself included in the Smith system, it will remain a constituent of that system for ever after. On the face of it, this suggestion seems to be contrary to the everyday experience of forgetting. It appears to ignore the all too obvious effects of physical illness, fatigue and old age, to say nothing of brain injuries or physical shocks like concussion. The result, or apparent result, of these purely physiological causes is that our mind—in this life at least—loses its old constituents almost as fast as it acquires new ones. Many experiences which once formed an integral part of our mental content (the things we learned at school, or even the sights and sounds of the day before yesterday) appear to slip completely from our ken, almost as if we had never experienced them at all. To all this Mr. Carington would reply that the appearances are deceptive. Experiences which were to all appearances completely forgotten can often be recalled under hypnosis; and psycho-analysis shows that even when forgotten they still continue to

produce effects upon us, and therefore are still in some sense constituents of our minds. This does not of course prove that *everything* which has at any time been a constituent of a given mind remains a constituent of it for ever after, as Bergson and Mr. Carington seem to think. But it does prove that *some* psychon linkages have a much greater 'sticking power' than normal everyday experiences would suggest, and makes it likely that many others have. Thus a psychon-system might still have enough permanent constituents to go on with, even though some of the linkages were broken either at the moment of death or after. It is true that after death it could not hope to acquire any new constituents by means of sensation, as it is continually doing in this life. But it might still acquire them by telepathy. Indeed it is reasonable to suppose that once the presence of biological needs has been removed and physical stimuli have been cut off, telepathy would play a vastly greater part than it does in this life. For there would be no counteracting influences to compete against it and inhibit it, in the way that sensory stimuli compete against it now.

But if a mind survives death, or at least a substantial part of it does, what kind of a world does it survive in? What conception are we to form of its environment, if indeed 'environment' is the right word? Mr. Carington's answer to this question seems to me to be almost certainly the correct one, assuming that survival is a fact at all. The next world, he thinks, is a world of *mental images*. What else indeed could it be, if the mind is entirely cut off from physical stimuli? We must conceive of it as a kind of dream-world, tempered by doses—perhaps very large doses—of telepathy. Such a world might seem at first sight distressingly thin and shadowy. But that would be a mistake. After all, even our present world, according to many philosophers, consists of nothing but sensa, actual and possible. At any rate the world of the plain man, the world to which all our everyday interests and emotions are directed, seems to consist of nothing else, whatever may be said of the Physicist's world of protons and electrons behind the scenes. In the next life, mental images will play the same part as sensa do in this, and they might play it just as well or better (as they already do in our dreams). In such a world there would still be perfectly good 'objects', composed of persistent sets or families of mental images; and they might be perfectly good occupants of

space, though the space perhaps would not accord with the axioms of Euclid. These sets of images need not be exclusively *visual* either—no more than they are in dreams. They might include tactual, auditory and olfactory images as well. If we allow enough telepathy, they might be public to many different minds, and independent of this or that individual mind, though not independent of mind altogether. The only important difference between these image-objects and the objects we are familiar with in this life would be a difference in the causal laws which they obey. The laws of Psychology, including the laws of Telepathy, would have replaced the laws of Physics. This seems to me a perfectly reasonable picture of what a *post-mortem* environment might be like, a picture which is quite in harmony with the rest of our knowledge. Incidentally, it would explain the 'materialistic' descriptions of life after death with which spiritualists are often reproached; for such sets of images would really have many of the properties which material objects do have. The notorious whisky and cigar, which caused so much merriment to readers of the alleged 'spirit communications' of Raymond Lodge, are really no more puzzling than the whisky or cigar which any of us might see or taste in our dreams. These speculations, I am pleased to think, suggest that philosophers will have a good time when they are dead, or at least will be able to adapt themselves to their new circumstances more easily than other people. For it would appear that Bishop Berkeley, even though he be wrong about this world, is substantially right about the next.

But though Mr. Carington's account of the next world (assuming there is one) is in general very coherent and reasonable, there is perhaps one criticism to be made of it, and the consequences of this are somewhat disturbing. It seems to me that his account of the mind lays much too much stress on cognition, and much too little on desire and emotion. For sensa and images, the only constituents he allows to it, are after all *cognita*; and it appears to me impossible to explain away the affective and conative aspects of the mind by resolving them into organic and muscular sensa, as he attempts to do. Now it seems quite likely that desire and emotion may play an even more important part in the next life (if there is one) than they do in this. If the next world is a kind of dream-world, it seems to me almost certain that they will, in view of all that has been discovered in recent years about

the psychological mechanism of dreams. The Hindus have a very significant name for the world into which we are supposed to pass at death. They call it *Kama Loca*, the 'world of desire'. In this connection, we may as well remember that there are terrifying dreams as well as pleasant ones; and if there were no way of waking up, and if our terrifying dreams were to be reinforced by telepathy from minds whose desires and emotions were similar, our experiences might be very unpleasant indeed. I mention this for the benefit of tough-minded persons who think that all talk of incarnate existence is 'mere wish fulfilment'. Not that wishes can decide the question one way or the other; assuredly they cannot, for it is a question of fact, whatever the answer may be. But if *per impossibile* they could decide it, perhaps annihilation and not survival is the thing which a prudent man should wish for.

There are many other points in Mr. Carington's book which are well worth careful discussion. But this review is already far longer than it has any right to be. I hope, however, that I have said enough to convince the reader that this is a book which he should on no account miss, if he has any interest at all in Philosophy or in Psychical Research. And if he has no interest in either at present, it is after all not too late for him to acquire one.

SELECTED NOTICES

A Walk in the Sun. By Harry Brown. Secker & Warburg. 6s.

Apartment in Athens. By Glenway Westcott. Harper Bros. \$2.50.

In Youth is Pleasure. By Denton Welch. Routledge. 8s. 6d.

The Shrimp and the Anemone. By L. P. Hartley. Putnam. 8s. 6d.

Loving. By Henry Green. Hogarth Press. 8s. 6d.

Time Must Have a Stop. By Aldous Huxley. Chatto & Windus. 9s. 6d.

THE western war ends messily in an enormous chaotic shambles, leaving us to contemplate the futile disintegration of an entire continent. That the contemplation does not cause deeper dismay is presumably due to man's long-standing intimacy with ruin. The world is closely acquainted with the triumph of the destructive force; disastrous conflicts; calamities; all forms of death: we know the pattern of destruction very well. We know the faces of the destroyers, the violent men lying in wait for blood; those who hunt, every one his brother with a net. Much less familiar is the causative factor underlying all this. How and why have we become so inured to horror that we can accept it without amazement; sometimes even almost without recognition? Has mankind a natural predilection for the negative principle of havoc, of

unbuilding? Or has the good man really perished out of the earth? Is there indeed none upright among men?

The last two queries are, of course, easily answered. Whatever individual variations of meaning are attached to the adjective, it is obvious that the 'good' human being is by no means extinct. It is the question of causes and tendencies which presents the real problem. And it seems appropriate to look for a solution of that problem among fiction writers, whose work, provided that it contains the element of truth in a timeless sense, demonstrates by means of individual types the sociological and psychological structure of the collective scene.

Some weeks ago, while I was reading *A Walk in the Sun* by Harry Brown, the following paragraph appeared in one of the daily papers: 'According to crack American neurologist, Major L. Alexander, average mental age of U.S. Army is between 13 and 14. Several million G.I. Joes are not going to like that one little bit. Any more than our own fighting men would.'

Another newspaper, giving an account of the same case (the trial of G.I. George E. Smith, Jr., for the murder of Sir Eric Teichman), reported: 'There is nothing odd about the revelation of Colonel (sic) Leo Alexander, U.S. psychologist, . . . that the average mental age of U.S. Army privates is about 14. Because, said a War Office official last night, the average mental age of rankers in all armies, including the British, is only 13 to 14. Dr. John Vincent Morris, who gave evidence at the trial, said last night: "Fourteen is a good average age for rankers in any army. The average mental age in the last war—12 years—was based upon less reliable tests".'

I have quoted these two paragraphs because they are both significant and relevant to the problem of the causes underlying the triumph of violence as well as to Mr. Brown's book.

A Walk in the Sun is a novel by an American soldier about American soldiers. Admittedly, the author includes sergeants and corporals as well as privates among his characters, and I have not seen any statistics about the average mental age of N.C.O.s. There is even an officer mentioned at the beginning of the book, Lieutenant Rand, 'a rather silly' young man; but he is killed in the first few pages and can therefore be disregarded. Mr. Harry Brown is himself a private; but as he is also a Harvard man and a poet, his I.Q. presumably tends to push the mental age graph up to a higher level.

Anyhow, he has written a good short novel about the war, extremely direct and simple, extremely unsentimental; with absolutely no melodrama and not much characterization. Mr. Brown uses the technique of understatement very cleverly. The members of his platoon converse in a cynical, humorous, wise-cracking style which helps to build up a devastating picture of the protracted strain, monotony, fatigue and boredom of war.

Boredom. Boredom is the operative word: and it has a special relation to the mental age of this author himself. War in our time is a pre-adult procedure (which is probably the reason why no outstanding artistic work has been inspired by the wars of this century). The mature adult of today, sunk, strangled, swallowed up as he must be by total warfare, is nevertheless fundamentally bored by it. He is bored because his orientation is positive. He is no longer interested in the negative destructive element at which the adolescent is fixed. He is too far ahead. His development has progressed and carried him

forward to the positive stage? This is especially true of the creative individual; and it seems to explain why Harry Brown has written what might be described as a study in boredom.

If, as the psychologists say, fourteen is the average mental age of rankers in all armies, it follows that the mental development of the vast majority of human beings ceases at puberty. In order, then, to understand the problem of the persistent destructive pattern—or any other human problem for that matter—one must first understand the personality of this adolescent in adult clothing who is the average citizen of our world. What are the main characteristics of this fourteen-year-old any soldier in any war, in any army, in any platoon? What is to be expected, what not expected of him—in wartime, and also in the breaks between wars? His potentialities are of the most vital importance and interest, for they determine (if not wholly, at least to an enormous extent) the conditions under which all human beings must live.

A glance at the emotional and mental equipment of the fourteen-year-old uncovers various traits consistent with the continuous universal predominance of the destructive impulse. A boy at this stage of development is incapable of abstract thought. As he can neither formulate original ideas nor criticize constructively the formulations of others, he is accessible to all forms of propaganda. He believes the authority which tells him that he is fighting for a just cause. Why not? He has no reason to disbelieve: he has no valid critical faculty. Luckily for him, he does not possess much of an æsthetic sense either, and so is able to endure degrees of ugliness and suffering which would disintegrate a mature personality. The two forces that subject courage to its severest strain, imagination and intuition, are to a great extent absent from his character make-up. His good morale is based on a certain insensitiveness.

The positive qualities of the adolescent are also quite compatible with the violence pattern: his enthusiasm, for instance; and his idealism, which so often takes the form of hero-worship manifested in a fanatical attachment to some leader. The boy of fourteen is well able to understand the functions of mechanical inventions such as rifles, cars and machine guns, and to manipulate them efficiently. He can carry out orders. He can perform practical tasks. Being highly gregarious, he derives intense satisfaction from identifying himself with a group of similar gregarious beings. He sinks his individuality in a sort of collective comradeship to which he adheres with blind loyalty; and this sense of union upholds him in dire situations, acting as a buffer between him and the horror without.

A leader of adolescents, if he is to maintain contact with his followers, must not himself develop too far from their mental level. He must remain sufficiently immature to participate wholeheartedly in the aggressive and destructive activities which are at once the main source of their enjoyment and of his power over them. Here one seems to be in sight of a plausible answer to the question. Why has violence triumphed so long upon earth? These boy-leaders, whose understanding cannot extend beyond the concrete, are bound to oppose cultural values which they perceive as a dangerous threat to their own vanity and self-esteem. The intellectual ideals of peace; art, spiritual development, individual perfection, are to the adolescent leader only a cause for uneasiness, hatred, distrust, contempt. He feels inferior when confronted by these abstract

valuations, and so is inevitably impelled to work for the downfall of the peaceful environment in which they flourish. He must work to establish the only situation which he is able to dominate and to understand: the havoc-chaos-death situation in which he feels most at home.

The work of every serious writer is a comment on some special aspect of the world these Dead-End dictators have prepared for him. Glenway Westcott's comment is direct, and expressed in an honest objective fashion. *Apartment in Athens* describes the sort of disaster which overtakes peaceable, simple, kindly people under the present-day brand of organized gangsterdom. The theme of the book is the theme of *Le Silence de la Mer*; and the fact that the characters move against a Greek background is immaterial. The central situation is that of a Nazi officer billeted upon a quiet bourgeois family in a German-occupied country. There is the obvious conflict of ideologies and personalities; there is the final catastrophe. Like Harry Brown, Mr. Westcott is an American, and he too writes in an unpretentious, matter-of-fact style. But the technique is used less successfully in his case, sometimes giving an effect of conscious simplification which weakens the emotional force of the novel.

Denton Welch and L. P. Hartley comment upon a hooligan-ridden world from more personal standpoints. Instead of describing situations resulting from a regime of violence, the work of these writers provides material which concerns the origin of such situations, and which is for that reason most relevant to considerations of emotional age. Both *In Youth is Pleasure* and *The Shrimp and the Anemone* are above the general level as regards execution as well as interest.

In Denton Welch's case it is the style which is primarily striking. Mr. Welch writes with gaiety and verve and a vivid individual power of observation. His phrasing is highly imaginative; there are passages of poetic brilliance in his work; yet the charm of his writing is largely due to the fact that words like 'polished' and 'sparkling' are inapplicable to it. There is a feeling of real spontaneity throughout the book, which describes the summer holiday of a fifteen-year-old schoolboy, rather regrettably named Orvil Pym. Orvil belongs to the cultural minority. He is certainly not on the side of the destroyers, to whom he is none the less linked by the very over-sensitiveness which divides him from them. Orvil is afraid to grow up. The eternal fourteen-year-olds are, of course, unaware of their immaturity, while Orvil consciously clings to his boyhood, even to the extent of asking God to save him from the calamity of becoming adult. In an intelligent upper-class boy, naturally destined to some social responsibility, this is a dangerous attitude. Arising out of a sort of squeamishness, it is the basis of a deliberate self-blinding process that may lead him ultimately to tolerate, or even encourage, violent destructive elements to which his own repressed instincts are really opposed. In emotional development, Orvil is already ahead of the gangster boys; except for the persistence of some infantile sadism, as displayed in an incident which Mr. Welch describes terrifyingly well.

Childish sadism allied to guilt feeling also appears prominently in *The Shrimp and the Anemone*. Mr. Hartley has written one of the rare books about children which are really worth reading. He must possess a phenomenally good memory or a remarkable intuition to describe the inner reactions of nine-year-old Eustace to the tragically possessive, domineering Hilda with such

sympathetic conviction. But the book is more than a sensitive study of a pathetic little boy devoured by his elder sister's far too intense, far too proprietary love. It has a more serious psychological interest and a wider application. The world of the child being only a miniature reflection of the immature adult world, nothing but a transposition of situations is necessary to see what Eustace saw when he bent over the rock pool.

Henry Green's novel about an Irish castle full of servants appears to fit very well into a study of emotional ages. *Loving* is entirely about loving: upstairs, downstairs: in the housemaid's attic; in that black boat-shaped bed with the gold oar at the foot. It is hard at first to translate into relevant psychological language the comment which Mr. Green makes in this mannered, amusing, concentrated, efficient style. But as one reads on, it becomes apparent that the elaborate and somewhat artificial structure of the book rests upon a foundation which is of importance in the considerations of age problems. The symbolism which Henry Green makes use of in *Loving* is especially interesting and significant. A house, with its various apartments, masters' and servants' rooms on different levels and so on, is an accepted symbol for the spheres of conscious and unconscious behaviour. The castle—which is of course nothing but a romanticized house—figures prominently in folk lore and fairy tales and makes a unique appeal to the child-mind as symbolizing mystery-fantasies and the glamour of the unknown.

Children growing up in large houses are always very curious about what goes on in the rooms which they rarely enter. A certain mysterious fascination attaches itself to these unfamiliar parts of the house: it is as if the child expected that the baffling repressions of what may be called 'the drawing-room floor' would be swept away and elucidated in the freer atmosphere of the servants' hall. The upper-class boy who feels frustrated at drawing-room level naturally looks below stairs for the explanations of problems which remain unsolved in the more genteel environment. Perhaps Mr. Green presupposes a similar infantile impulse in the minds of his readers: if so, he provides them with a surprisingly adult answer.

Loving accentuates the fact that there is nothing to be found in the servants' quarters which cannot be observed equally well in the drawing-room. Emotional and social conduct are much the same at both levels, except that the castle servants, far from displaying a greater freedom from inhibitions, are considerably more repressed than their employers. No dinner-party ritual of precedence could be more repressive than the rigidly observed etiquette of the servants' hall. The climax of the book is the episode in which the housemaid enters her mistress's room one morning to find 'a man in the bed'. To this situation the girl reacts in the typical manner of the immature, carefully sheltered young lady of Victorian times. She turns pale and faint, is hardly able to breathe, and shows all the characteristic symptoms of a severe psychological trauma. Mr. Green makes the point that maturity is less likely to be found among the workers than in the upper-class sections of society, where some individuals at least have been influenced towards becoming conscious by contact with psychology.

In Aldous Huxley's new book the subject of mental and emotional age occupies an important place. Like all the work of this author, *Time Must*

Have a Stop is stimulating and brilliantly conceived. Throughout the book there are references to the problem of immaturity and its universal and individual consequences: at the very end the hero's father appears: 'adult in worldly wisdom and professional skill; embryonic in spirit and even in character'. Reflecting on this 'gruesome anomaly', Huxley writes: 'and, of course, in an age that had invented Peter Pan and raised the monstrosity of arrested development to the rank of an ideal, he wasn't in any way exceptional. The world was full of septuagenarians playing at being in their thirties or even in their teens . . . when they ought to have been trying to unearth the spiritual reality which they had spent a lifetime burying under a mountain of garbage.' Apparently it does not matter to Huxley whether this 'garbage' consists of public service and political idealism, or of a passion for gambling. Both are what he considers the primary obligation of every human being: to perfect as far as possible his own nature.

It is slightly disconcerting early in the book to be introduced to God in the guise of the gaseous vertebrate, the perfection of being, although Haeckel's definition is not intended to be taken seriously. The author uses it, much as Haeckel himself did, to ridicule the absurdity which can be arrived at through imperfectly understood dogmas and improperly applied terms.

Mr. Huxley's mind is of the scientific type that does not tolerate inaccurate or sentimental thinking. That his intellectual attitude is predominantly clear and direct is shown in his 'debunking' treatment of seances and the possibility of spirit communication with the physical world. His minimum working hypothesis is in no way allied to the spiritualistic humbug which Bruno tries to analyse. It is really a kind of short cut, a religious esperanto which must be learned by all members of all religions if peace is to be assured. Only when the whole of humanity has one common religious background, Aldous Huxley thinks, will wars come to an end and the domination of adolescent gangsterdom be overthrown. What he now appears to be formulating is a religious mysticism based on the universal identity principle of the early humanistic philosophers: certainly a rather surprising doctrine for a modern intellectual writer of Mr. Huxley's type to put forward. The somewhat pagan mysticism of the early renaissance, which laid the foundation of modern cultural life, was undoubtedly of extreme vigour and intellectual power. But to transplant a whole ideology, no matter how vital, from the place and time of its natural growth to an entirely different climate, is an operation which cannot be successfully carried out. Mysticism grafted upon a positivist stock is an unnatural growth indeed. It tends to degenerate into sentimentality when adopted by sects whose members are not equipped either by nature or education, for its complete understanding. Ideas which were appropriate in the era of romanticism are not easily applied to present-day problems, or fitted into the personality-picture of a writer whose talent owes much more to modern psychology than it does to anachronistic and only partially assimilated doctrines.

Huxley discusses world problems soberly enough. He deals with economics, politics, wars and so on, in an eminently practical way. Why, then, does he in this single instance of religious doctrine, deviate from his usual attitude? He does not make use of mystical wisdom when he predicts the horrors

of a great future war between the Eastern and Western races. Nor is any metaphysical identity-feeling responsible for the creation of the characters in his novel: Eustace, the cultured sensualist, whose enjoyment of food and wine remains unimpaired by death: the far-from-spiritual Mrs. Thwale; or the young poet Sebastian, who is the principal character in this immensely interesting, rather confusing, rather confused book.

What has happened to turn Huxley the clear-headed objective intellectual into Huxley the symbolist-mystic with a bias towards Yoga and occultism?

Such a shift seems too improbable, altogether too out-of-line with the clearly-defined personality which this writer displays in his work, to be psychologically valid. One has the impression that there is about it a quality of impermanence and unreality; as if, possibly, some abnormal aspect of the inner and outer environment had temporarily deflected his nature from its fit and harmonious development. It does not seem reasonably credible that the change can have come about from within, from Huxley's own inmost being. It has no psychological continuity. It is not psychologically consistent. And because it seems alien to its creator, his doctrine fails to convince; it fails to answer the question, the case of Germany shows that an identity-creed will not prevent emotional immaturity. Mysticism will not destroy the destructive impulse. Minimum working hypothesis does not solve the problem.

Apart from its metaphysical theme, *Time Must Have a Stop* is full of good things. Huxley writes fluently and provocatively on many subjects: on the absurdity of political utopias; nationalism; capitalism; communism; on the phoniness of heroic figures and political idealists; on the snobism of art and of society. He is never boring or clumsy or in bad taste. And if his characters are easily recognized symbols rather than living people, this is only the defect of his qualities as an outstanding writer, more interested in concepts than in emotions or things.

ANNA KAVAN

The Yogi and the Commissar. By Arthur Koestler. Cape, 10s. 6d.

THAT Koestler's education was scientific, while even now the majority of English creative writers have a childhood background of the classics, is a distinction which goes far to explain his peculiar position. Reflecting on the element of strangeness, even of impropriety, which was once found in Aldous Huxley's books, it occurs to me that his scientific background is the cause. We are unfamiliar in this country with a creative art which springs from science rather than from the humanities. In public schools (rather less at the university, and less, it may be, in State schools) a deliberate anti-scientific snobbery has been cultivated on the classical side, a deliberate philistinism among scientists and mathematicians. The loss both to the general culture of the community and to individual intellectuals has often been deplored; but little has yet been done to show how harmful and artificial this conflict is.

Yet, as the unusual position of Koestler suggests, this is a favourable moment for a genuine and generous reconciliation. Historians, classical scholars and literary critics have been humbled by successful scientific invasions of their territory: scientists have been humbled by 'the recognition of the limitations

of science within its own terms of reference' (p. 241). Happy co-operation has already been achieved: a notable example was the application of Frazerian anthropology to ancient Greek religion made by Jane Harrison and others early in the century, which led to a revolution in classical studies. But almost everything still remains to be done, and even such a layman's science as psychology has yet to apply its recent discoveries to many relevant fields.

One great difficulty is that few individuals are capable of fully apprehending both the significant discoveries of modern science and the complex pattern of history or the poetic and linguistic details of classical erudition. In the field of pure scholarship the dual apprehension may be achieved and applied by collaboration. For the artist the task remains formidable—no less than to apply his unaided reconciling genius to the latest discoveries of physics and biology as well as to the more familiar fields of history, psychology and the arts themselves. Koestler is a kind of rough sketch for such a man, an imperfect but admirable pioneer.

Many of the articles in this book have already appeared in *HORIZON* and elsewhere, but one of the most brilliant of these is worth recalling for the light that it throws on its author. Writing of the Intelligentsia, Koestler is writing of himself. Although he includes Bloomsbury in his survey of the species, the intelligentsia is really a continental phenomenon. (Even France, it seems to me, has seldom produced the authentic type.) I think of Herzen, and it is easier to imagine Koestler in that Hampstead circle than anywhere in the modern world. Politically advanced, cultivated and well ahead of contemporary scientific knowledge, the nineteenth-century Intelligentsia made the last successful attempt to create a universal humanism. They were rebels, but rebels within the old rich rebellious tradition of Europe. Much has happened since then to frustrate a later attempt. The increasing specialization of science has made it difficult for one man even to be a leading physicist as well as a leading biologist. But there is a factor which is still more important. A large area of the human spirit was confidently neglected by these nineteenth-century humanists on the binding authority of their eighteenth-century predecessors. Religion was left out of account. But today it has reared its fascinating, grotesque head again, and cannot be overlooked. We handle it gingerly, we speak of it in euphemisms, but we can no longer deny the deep religious instinct in man, nor its rich achievements in the past.

Koestler is too good an intellectual to deny it, but too exclusively an intellectual to make use of it.

The most important article in the book is the second and hitherto unpublished part of *The Yogi and the Commissar*. As a thirty-page exposition of the main intellectual problems of our time, I do not see how it could be improved upon. After a brief review of the principal stages in the intellectual conflict between free-will and determinism, Koestler makes a simple statement of the most revolutionary scientific discoveries of the century. It appears that these can be summarized in the almost inconceivably significant fact that both below the human level of perception (the electronic level) and above it (the cosmological level) the most fundamental of our space-time conceptions have had to be discarded. An electron, for example, can move from one point to another in no time. And as for determinism or pre-will, an atom behaves

unpredictably (free-will) within a configuration whose behaviour is strictly predictable (determined). As a result of all this, science has been obliged to conceive of separate horizontal levels (the sub-atomic, the physical, the biological, the psychological, etc.), to each of which a different pattern of laws must be applied. The new spirit of humility comes from the recognition of vertical progressions from level to level, which are not only unexplained, but inexplicable. A common error of scientific naïveté has been to 'reduce' the phenomena of a higher level to the terms of a lower. ('Freud's) reduction of *social* values like courage and self-sacrifice to the *psychological* level of masochism, the death-instinct, etc., is a process analogous to the reduction of live organisms to their chemical components. For on the sociological level the individual emerges as part of a new whole, and the integrative relations on this level are specific and irreducible.'

I have no doubt that the mere scientific statements of this article are common knowledge to any student of biology or physics. But Koestler's exposition is not only a brilliant summary for the ignorant: it brilliantly implies possible applications of scientific discovery to the whole human thought.

This new humility of science has allowed the religious dogmatist to crow a little and flounce his rather dingy tail. ('There is something repulsive in the way the scholastic gloats over the difficulties of science—like a lecherous dotard wooing a girl disappointed by her young lover.') But little comfort is ultimately held out to him. An important concession to the *religious spirit* has certainly been made by the admission of the incomprehensible, and consequently of a field for contemplation as distinct from analysis. Yet there is not one simple dogma of theistic religion which has been rendered more intellectually palatable.

As an exponent of these fundamental problems Koestler is as lucid and orderly as anyone writing in English today. But though the intellect is able to recognize its own limitations, and even to define them, it cannot unaided surmount them. Because he lacks the religious instinct (or the poetic—for I confess that I am unable to distinguish between the two) there is much material which he is unsuited to handle. To write of Richard Hillary, something more than intellect was needed—richness of imagination, even perhaps a certain poetic insight. The result is that this is signally the worst piece of writing in the book. '... sceptic crusaders, knights of effete veneer, sick with the nostalgia of something to fight for which as yet is not....' This is not only embarrassing: it is the uneasy product of an intellectual's attempt at non-intellectual expression.

In the long essay on Soviet Russia, however, Koestler is admirably and devastatingly on his own ground. It is the most damning indictment which I have ever read. Except for an appalling first-hand description of Soviet penal methods, Koestler has been content to prove all his points from official Soviet sources. He shows that every single legislative means taken by the Soviets in the last fifteen years has been deliberately regressive: every single measure has been in the direction of autocracy, privilege and the abolition of human freedom. There are, I think certain significant material and cultural achievements which he has neglected. But to cite these would be a feeble reply indeed to the principal charges. We are confronted with a new economic system of

rigid nationalization, bureaucratic control and terrorism which has no more in common with socialism than with feudalism. It is not a wanton attack, for the myth of Russia as a left-wing country is probably the most dangerous single factor in post-war Europe. The European socialists (many even, of the European communists) are in the main current of European thought. Marx himself was consciously and proudly a European rebel from a great European tradition. *Stalinism*, on the other hand, is a blunt negation not only of every tested European value, but of every recurring impulse of European revolt. The last great political tragedy of our world may well be the exploding of the Soviet myth a decade too late.

PHILIP TOYNBEE

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor of HORIZON.

Sir,

Mr. Philip Toynbee having made, last November, statements damaging to certain living French writers, I pointed out, in a letter you were good enough to publish in the following March, the inaccuracy of at least one of them. Whereupon, as Mr. Toynbee understood, there was no more to be said. Yet lo! in your May number up bobs Mr. Anthony de Hoghton to try to reopen the matter.

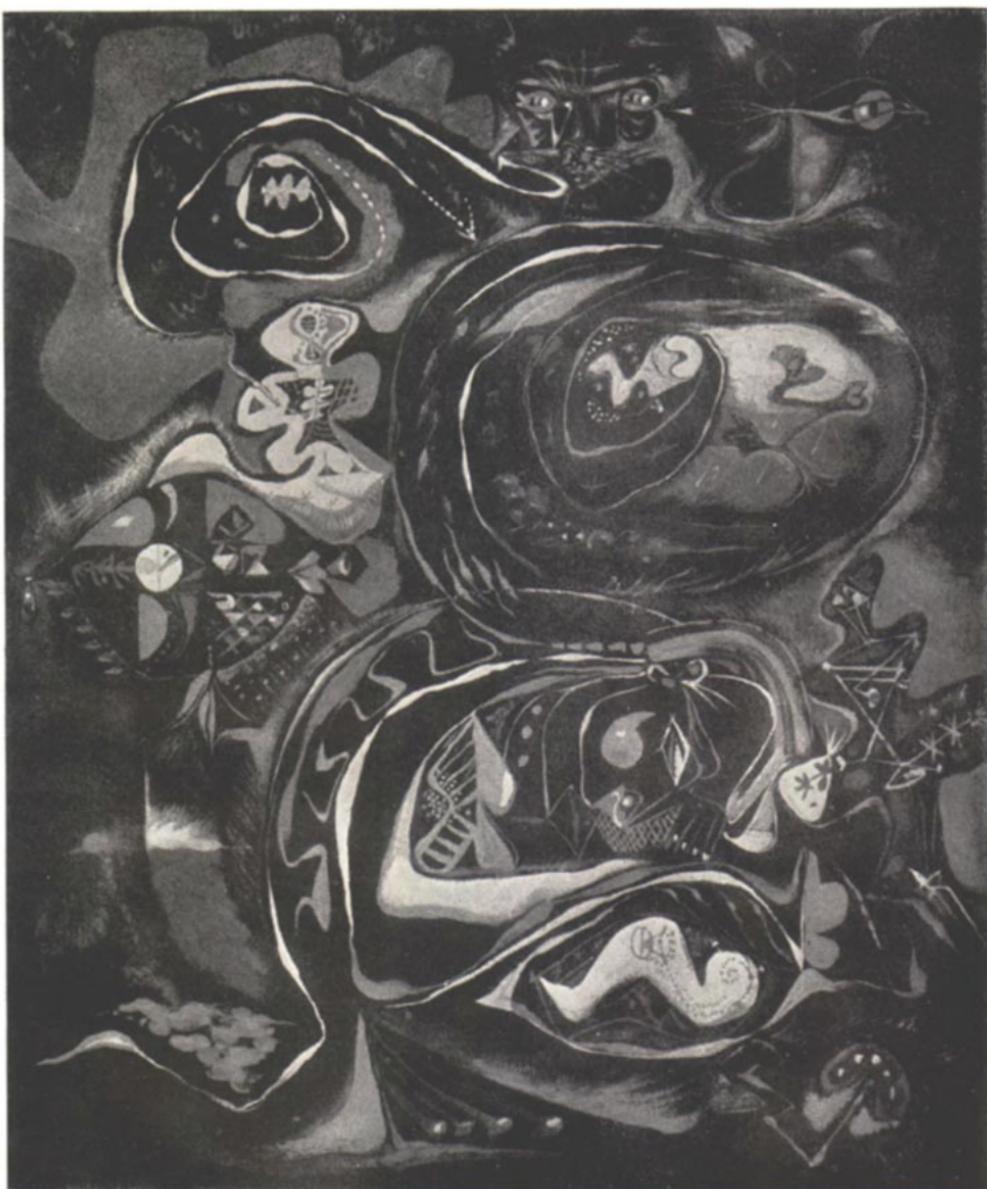
Could he read English, he would have grasped that if I appeared in the guise of a champion—to adopt his delightfully humorous expression—it was not of M. Henry de Montherlant, master of French prose as he is, but of decency and truth, and if I undertook the duty on my own initiative—as in a free country any one may—it was because nobody else came forward to do them reverence. Who, by the way, has briefed Mr. de Hoghton?

The question is one to which alone Echo can reply. Judging by the tone of the popular Press, he is a representative of the vast semi-literate section of the English public which, in its present mood, is indistinguishable from a lynching mob in Kentucky or Tennessee. Presumably M. de Montherlant has never harmed him in any way. But he has heard that a man-hunt is on, and like some animal he at once joins in the hue and cry. In this instance, however, it is a phantom man-hunt. *Le Solstice de Juin* is not a novel and it is not 'pro-Nazi'. It has not been banned by the only body qualified to ban books in France, the *Direction du contrôle militaire de l'information*. M. de Montherlant, its author, having been heard by the *Commission d'épuration* of the *Société des Gens de Lettres*, was declared by this body not to have offended during the German occupation in any particular.

By all means let Mr. de Hoghton quote from the lucubrations of M. Gide and M. Mauriac till he is blue in the face; he will not change those facts. And although we have travelled far from the time when the terms 'Fair play', 'Sub judice', 'British sportsmanship', and the injunction 'Don't kick a man when he's down', were taken seriously, even the *Café de Flore* is not yet a French court of law.

MONTGOMERY BELGION

[*This correspondence is now closed*]



ANDRÉ MASSON. *Meditation on an oak leaf*. 1942. Oil

Valentine Gallery, New York

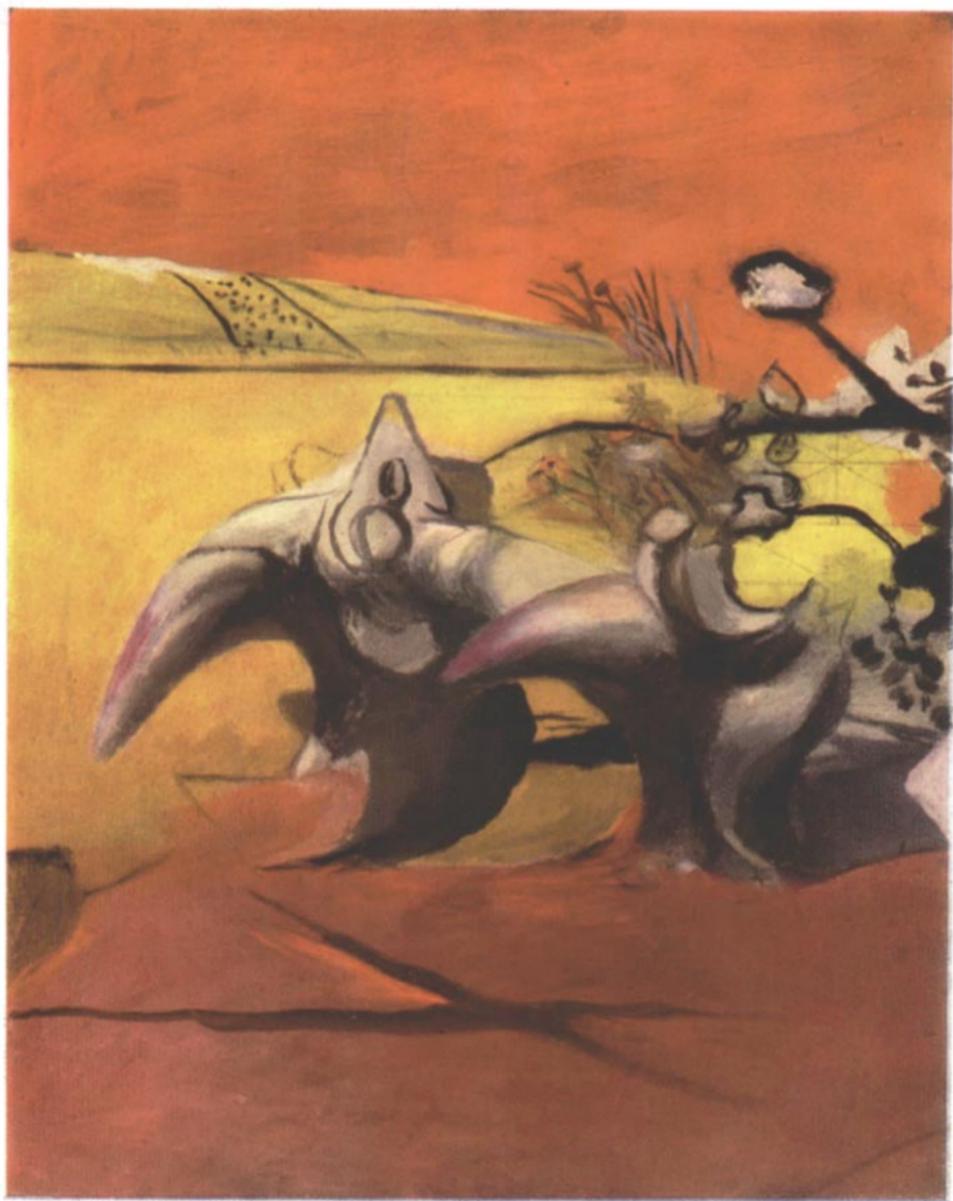


ANDRÉ MASSON. *Le Pain*. 1944. Oil

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Coll. W. A.Evill

polemic

will be a symposium of philosophy, psychology, aesthetics and sociology. The name **polemic** has been chosen because it suggests that we intend to encourage an exchange of opinions and ideas rather than to make propaganda for any compact system or predetermined outlook.

We assume that if language is finite, and if existence is infinite, every verbal proposition will be limited in its truth; and also since speech is inherited from the unscientific and magical past, its whole structure and vocabulary must be suspected to be less than precisely accurate as a means of explaining the universe. It follows that certainty, expressed in words, may always be false and reactionary.

Difference of opinion will therefore be understood as a natural reflection of the unlimited intricacy of the world we live in, and articles from more than one point of view, on a given subject, will be printed in each number. At the same time, the editorial policy will not be quite unprejudiced; it will assume that separately during the last fifty years there have been four revolutionary developments which are significant for the future of human thought and behaviour:

- 1 The discovery of the unconscious by Freud
- 2 The tendency of philosophy, as a subject, to develop into a science of verbal meaning (semantics, symbolism, logical positivism)
- 3 The trend in the arts away from representation towards expression and construction
- 4 The evolution of marxism as the Faith of tens of millions of people in Europe and Asia.

polemic will be a medium for discussing these developments in relation to the theoretical issues of the day. Unfortunately the general election has postponed the production of the first edition until 1 September. **polemic** will be edited by Humphrey Slater, and published by Rodney Phillips at Premier House, Dover Street, London, W.1, at two shillings and sixpence a copy. The contributors will include:

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